Dangers of Excessive Sitting Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

EXCESSIVE SITTING

While some of the research is still not clear that excessive sitting is the direct cause for certain health problems, it has shown that it is a factor that is linked to many health problems. Our bodies are designed to move and be active.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

HEALTH RISKS OF PROLONGED SITTING

Obesity: The consequent imbalance between energy intake and expenditure leads to an unhealthy weight gain and obesity. Obesity, raises the risk of several deadly non-communicable diseases, including metabolic syndrome and heart disease.

Chronic Joint Pains: The muscles of the legs and hips, particularly the glutes, hamstrings, and quadriceps, are the major muscles you make use of when you sit. However, when you sit for too long, you overstretch and strain these muscles and this may cause them to become tight and short.

These muscles protect the joints of the hip and back and when they become inflexible and short, especially if you maintain a poor sitting posture, they cause problems for your hip joints and back. Some complications of these include disc prolapse, nerve impingement, and premature degeneration of the joint structures.

Heart Disease: Sitting for long periods has been linked to heart disease: experts say that people who sit for long periods have a 147 percent greater risk of developing heart disease (heart attacks and stroke).

Diabetes: Inactivity from prolonged sitting can alter how the body handles sugar. Sitting for too long impairs tissue sensitivity to insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar. Research shows that sitting for long periods raises the risk of diabetes by more than 112 percent.

Cancer: Physical inactivity has been linked to certain types of cancer, including the lungs, colon, and endometrium. A review published in The Journal of the National Cancer Institute reveals that too much sitting may raise the risk of colon cancer by 24 percent, the risk of lung cancer by 21 percent, and the risk of endometrial cancer by 24 percent.

Deep Vein Thrombosis: A deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a blood clot in the deep veins of the leg. DVT is a serious health problem because the clot could break off and obstruct blood flow in other blood vessels it may settle in. If the clot settles in the pulmonary artery of the lungs, it causes pulmonary embolism, a medical emergency that can lead to death if not promptly treated.

Mental Health: Sitting too much each day has been linked to mental health issues, including anxiety disorders and depression.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

ERGONOMICS FOR PROLONGED SITTING

Besides being uncomfortable, poor sitting posture and workplace ergonomics over time can damage spinal structures and contribute to recurrent episodes of neck or back pain.

Elbow Measure: Begin by sitting comfortably as close as possible to your desk so that your upper arms are parallel to your spine. Rest your hands on your work surface (e.g. desktop, computer keyboard). If your elbows are not at a 90-degree angle, move your chair either up or down.

Thigh Measure: Check that you can easily slide your fingers under your thigh at the leading edge of the chair. If it is too tight, you need to prop your feet up with an adjustable footrest. If there is more than a finger width between your thigh and the chair, you need to raise the desk/work surface so that you can raise your chair.

Calf Measure: With your buttocks against the chair back, try to pass your clenched fist between the back of your calf and the front of your chair.

Lower-Back Support: Your buttocks should be pressed against the back of your chair, and there should be a cushion that causes your lower back to arch slightly so that you don’t slump forward as you tire. This support is essential to minimize the load (strain) on your back. Never slump or slouch in your chair, as this places extra stress on your spine and lumbar discs.

Eye level: Close your eyes while sitting comfortably with your head facing forward. Slowly open your eyes. Your gaze should be aimed at the center of your computer screen. If your computer screen is higher or lower than your gaze, you need to either raise or lower it.

Armrest: Adjust the armrest of your chair so that it just slightly lifts your arms at the shoulders. Use of an armrest allows you to take some of the strain off your neck and shoulders, and it should make you less likely to slouch forward in your chair.

LESS SITTING – MORE MOVEMENT

- Take a break from sitting every 30 minutes.
- Stand while talking on the phone or watching television.
- If you work at a desk, try a standing desk – or improvise with a high table or counter.
- Walk with your colleagues for meetings rather than sitting in a conference room.
- Position your work surface above a treadmill – with a computer screen and keyboard on a stand or a specialized treadmill-ready vertical desk – so that you can be in motion throughout the day.

FINAL WORD

Regardless of whether you exercise or not, if you sit for long periods each day, it counteracts the effects of the exercises and increases your risk of these diseases. In fact, experts say these risks increase with every 2 hours of sitting. The main objective of a job design is to reduce the amount of time the person spends “just” sitting. Frequent changes in the sitting position are not enough to protect against blood pooling in the employee’s legs.