

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS NORTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

FEBRUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

Fidgeting Your Way Toward Good Health

Do you know someone who fidgets a lot? If you do, hold that thought for a few moments; we'll get back to it.

Sedentary behavior is often in the news as of late and is frequently associated with creating hazards to good health. These hazards differ from those that can be attributed to a lack of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Up until very recently, referring to someone as sedentary meant that they were not meeting current guidelines for physical activity. Put into simple terms, if you were exercising for 60 or more minutes per day, you were considered to be physically active. If you were exercising only 10 minutes per day, you were sedentary. But now, accumulating evidence suggests that sedentary time is closely associated with health risks regardless of how much physical activity you perform on a daily basis. Further, it is entirely possible to meet current physical activity guidelines while still being incredibly sedentary. What this means is that if you work out for an hour each morning and then go to work to spend eight hours behind a desk, you could still be at risk for developing certain

illnesses and diseases. In fact, this new distinction has even led to the relatively new field of *sedentary physiology*, which may be considered as separate and distinct from exercise physiology.

Much research has linked sedentary behavior to conditions such as cardiovascular disease and obesity. While experts work towards agreeing on what exactly is enough to combat the ill effects of sedentary behavior, Nathan Fethke, associate professor of occupational and environmental health at the University of Iowa, has stated that "I don't think there's a definite answer" for how long a worker should sit or stand. "You see lots of different recommendations, from getting up and moving around two minutes every hour to suggesting you need two hours of standing time per day," Mr. Fethke said.

Recent research from the University Centre Shrewsbury and the University of Chester, both in the UK, has led to recommendations that office workers should stand daily for at least two hours and eventually increase that to four hours to combat ill effects of lengthy sitting. But that may not be practical. However, taking breaks, using sit-stand desks intermittently, etc. can

effectively and easily break up prolonged sitting and provide some value. Another benefit of using a sit-stand desk, Mr. Fethke postulated, is that they may lower musculoskeletal discomfort, decrease the risk of stroke, and possibly lessen the risk of developing diabetes and heart disease.

Now let's get back to fidgeting. As it turns out, it may be beneficial to your health. According to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, fidgeting may counteract the adverse health effects of sitting down for long periods of time. During the course of this fidgeting study, which was published in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, more than 12,000 women living in the United Kingdom responded to a survey about the average amount of time they spent each day sitting and their overall level of fidgeting. Further, the participants were queried on their diet, smoking habits, level of alcohol consumption, and amount of physical activity. At the conclusion of the study, the participants were followed to gather mortality data over a mean of 12 years.

As a result of this unique study, researchers from University College London, the University of Edinburgh,

and the University of Leeds found that women who sat for long periods of time and considered themselves not very fidgety had an increased risk of mortality. However, women who considered themselves moderately or very fidgety had no increased risk from extended bouts of sitting.

Although other studies have linked taking breaks from sitting with improved health, this is the first study to examine whether fidgeting might help. Study co-lead author and University College London researcher Gareth Hagger-Johnson said in a press release that “Our results support the suggestion that it’s best to avoid sitting still for long periods of time, and even fidgeting may offer enough of a break to make a difference.”

So if you really want to decrease the effects of being sedentary, why stop with merely fidgeting? Recent research from the University of Missouri indicates that workers who are seated for much of their day can reverse damage to blood vessels caused by prolonged sitting by taking a break to go for a brief walk. Researchers examined the vascular function of eleven healthy young men before and after they sat for extended periods of time and then got up and walked. After the participants sat at a desk for six hours, blood flow in the popliteal artery was noted to be significantly decreased. After the participants walked for 10 minutes at their own pace, blood flow and vascular function

improvement was noted. The popliteal artery, which extends off of the femoral artery, is of importance because it is the primary distributor of oxygenated blood to regions in proximity to the knee.

So while we await the results of additional research on how best to combat the hazards of sedentary living, do what your mom often told you not to – fidget.

Bob Dooley

A Message from the Local Chapter President

I hope this newsletter finds you all doing well. I would like to thank everyone for the super attendance at our monthly meetings. I would like to also thank Lance for the awesome lunch he’s been ordering - great job. If you haven’t been able to make the meetings you are missing some great technical sessions along with valuable networking opportunities. This month, Kelly Ingram-Mitchell, who is the President of Unify Health Services here in Jacksonville, will be talking about Fit for Duty programs. Also, be sure to save the date of March 16th for our Annual OSHA update. OSHA’s Area Director (or designee) will bring us up to date on what is happening in our area. This has always been a great session. Please note, however, that the location of this meeting has been changed to the Northeast Florida Safety Council.

And last, I would also like to ask for everyone’s support

for the Workers Memorial Day event which will be taking place on April 27th from 10:00am until noon. There will be more details to follow for this event and thus far it is looking to be a first class event.

Dan Hemsall

Article Sources and Hyperlinks of Interest

<http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/13096-fidgeting-while-sitting-may-lower-adverse-health-risks-study>

[http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(15\)00345-1/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(15)00345-1/abstract)

<http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/13129-a-10-minute-walk-can-benefit-vascular-health-after-lengthy-sitting-study>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1113/EP085238/abstract>

<http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/12644-no-definitive-answer-on-how-much-to-sit-stand-at-work-experts>

Next ASSE Local Chapter Meeting

Our next membership meeting will be held at the Northeast Florida Safety Council on March 16 at 11:30 a.m. The topic is the Annual OSHA Update. Please RSVP to Steve Wilson at steven_wilson1@me.com.

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- Lance Simons – President Elect
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