



SCALE BACK ON SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR

What is sedentary behavior? Sedentary behaviors are usually those that involve sitting or lying down. Binge watching the latest hit series and long days at an office job usually fit the description. Sometimes we cannot help it. This past year has brought on an increase in sedentary behavior for a lot of people due to all the virtual meetings that require us to sit in front of a computer for long hours.

Why do we need to scale back on sedentary behavior? Unfortunately, sedentary behavior is associated with poorer health outcomes. Meaning, it puts you at a higher risk for developing chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes.

What can we do? Life seems to demand sedentary behavior all too often. It often takes intentional efforts to scale back on being sedentary. You likely know all the tips about parking farther away at the grocery store, always taking the stairs, and sneaking in extra steps throughout your day. This past year has changed things and those tips just might not be practical for you. The following are 5 tips for scaling back on sedentary behavior in 2021.

- **Schedule standing and movement breaks.** Is your calendar filled with virtual meetings and conference calls? Are you staying inside at home more frequently than ever before? Set a reminder to move. Better yet, take a short walk, movement, or stretch break. Consider standing or fidgeting while participating in some of your meetings.

- **Get out of your office for lunch!** Don't continue to sit at your desk and eat your lunch while working. Change locations, requiring you to get up and get moving. Even a short walk down the hall is better than continuing to sit at your desk.
- **Walking phone calls.** Instead of sitting in your office or on your couch for phone calls, get moving while talking. This is the same for calls with families or friends! Take a walk down your driveway or pace around your home, either way you are moving.
- **Binge watching breaks!** We could get crazy and suggest watching your favorite show while walking on the treadmill or peddling on the stationary bike. If that's too extreme for you or you don't have access to that type of equipment, be sure to move around frequently. Limit yourself on how many episodes you watch at a time. Turn your favorite show into an exercise; 5 squats every commercial, 10 jumping or arm jacks every time a new episode starts.
- **Find movement you enjoy.** Another way to combat sedentary behavior is to focus on adding in movement you enjoy doing. This could be leisurely walks, yoga, running, dancing, or gardening. You are much more likely to do things you enjoy. Take the time to experiment with different types of activities to find what you enjoy most. Don't forget to add it to your calendar to make sure you get it done!

INCLUSION MATTERS: Movement matters for everyone! Sedentary behavior may be an even greater health threat for individuals with a disability causing limited mobility by spending most of the day in a seated position, given the lower rate of daily, sporadic activity. It is important to find new and creative ways to generate more movement among people with disabilities spread across the day. This can be done by shifting body weight while sitting in a wheelchair (also good for pressure relief), fidgeting (tapping, moving head, arms, etc.), gestures, etc. These movements provide a cumulative health benefit that, when added to regular fitness-related activity, will lower the risk of chronic diseases. You can also get moving more throughout the day with short bursts of activity in a time

that works for you and is enjoyable. The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD) has free video resources to follow along and get you started!

Inclusive Home Workouts Playlist: <https://www.nchpad.org/1754/6911/Inclusive-Home-Workouts>

8 Minute (Inclusive Workout): <https://www.nchpad.org/1723/6844/8-Minute-Workout-Video>

Deskercise! <https://www.nchpad.org/contentimages/2631.png>

The Stretch Effect <https://www.nchpad.org/1304/6080/The-Stretch-Effect>

FAMILY MATTERS: Laptops, tablets, and cellphones, oh my! Talk with your kids about how they can reduce their sedentary behaviors caused by these devices and get active. It is recommended that children engage in 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Hiking, going to a playground, and activities like dancing or playing sports are great ways to instill positive lifestyle behaviors that encourage families to be active.

LINKS: Health risks of an inactive lifestyle: <https://medlineplus.gov/healthrisksofaninactivelifestyle.html>
How to fix a sedentary lifestyle: <https://www.verywellhealth.com/how-to-beat-a-sedentary-lifestyle-2509611>