

# Creative Ways to Exercise with a Sedentary Job

## Dangers of Sitting All-Day

Any type of movement that you do 8-10 hours a day, whether it be sitting, standing, kneeling, etc - will likely result in certain muscle imbalances. For instance, if you sit all day, your glutes, legs, and back are largely inactive and this slows down our metabolism. And if you stand all day, the muscles involved in this motion are going to get overused and others underused creating the imbalance. What we decide to do for exercise outside of our working hours is crucial in order to help with this imbalance. Some of us may not feel like we have a lot of time to exercise for a long period of time each day, and so rather we should look to incorporate brief changes in position (standing vs. sitting) throughout our day to assist our metabolism and assist with correcting muscle imbalances.

## What to Do About It

The goal is to avoid being stagnant for too long during your work day. No one strategy (i.e., desk pedal, standing desk, bouncing balls for a chair) is going to be the magic option here. Here are some general guidelines to follow in your own work schedule:

- **Stand Up and/or change your position every half hour to one hour** (set an alarm on your phone or watch to help you remember!)
- **Incorporate as many "work positions" as possible - both standing and sitting**
  - When you talk on the phone stand up, do some light squats, stand on one foot (work on balance)
  - Go talk to someone instead of sending them an email and stand while talking to them
- Give yourself plenty of options to move throughout your day: **take the stairs, walking/standing desks, go out for a walk to pick up lunch or a coffee/healthy snack, get a pedal desk, etc.**
- **Introduce walking/moving meetings!** Take your meetings out around the block to get social and active at the same time
  - <http://www.acefitness.org/fitness-fact-article/3223/20-active-ways-to-be-social-at-work/>
- If possible, **do some form of exercise/muscle strengthening activities every hour or section of the day such as tabata, 7 minutes app, just a walk)**
  - ["Deskercise" Ideas](#)
  - [How to incorporate 30 minutes of exercise INTO your workday:](#)

## More Resources & Ideas:

- <http://www.katysays.com/your-position-in-life/>
- [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/01/sitting-bad-for-health\\_n\\_1245261.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/01/sitting-bad-for-health_n_1245261.html)
- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/health/workout-at-work/>
- <http://www.active.com/fitness/articles/6-ways-to-stay-fit-from-your-seat>
- <http://www.gottabemobile.com/2011/05/26/10-ways-to-fight-desk-job-death-stay-active-at-work/>
- <http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/exercise-at-your-desk>

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**Try multi-tasking:** Our exercise leader did side lunges while conducting a phone interview.

## A workout at work?

**WE ALL NEED TO GET UP AND MOVE, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO?** In the spirit of public service (and because our boss made us), The Post's infographics department tested exercises in and around our cubicles twice a day for a week to see which ones real people could incorporate into a workday. The moves were suggested by experts whose jobs involve studying motion, preventing obesity and generally getting people off their duffs. We rejected a few immediately — jumping jacks? Not in this bra! — but chose these 12. Our observations aren't scientific, but they're definitely real. *By Bonnie Berkowitz and Laura Stanton*

|                     | NOT TOO | VERY  |
|---------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>Difficult?</b>   | 1 2 3   | 1 2 3 |
| <b>Sweaty?</b>      | 1 2 3   | 1 2 3 |
| <b>Humiliating?</b> | 1 2 3   | 1 2 3 |

**1 RAISE THE ROOF (20 reps)**  
While marching in place, push toward the ceiling with your palms up and thumbs almost touching your shoulders. Make it harder by holding books or water bottles.

**Pro:** One person found it "comforting" to dust off a 1990s dance move.  
**Con:** Brief moment of panic while you try to remember if you shaved your armpits.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**2 TRICEPS KICK (20 reps)**  
While marching in place, bend at the hips, about 45 degrees. Bend your elbows, then extend them behind you as if you are lifting weights.

**Pro:** Loosens your upper body.  
**Con:** Awkward-looking. Several people accidentally whacked things behind them.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**3 THE HULK (20 reps)**  
Keep marching and leaning. With your elbows bent and fists together in front, move your arms back like wings. Try to touch your shoulder blades together.

**Pro:** Some people make funny sound effects.  
**Con:** Draws attention to the chest area.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**4 HAMSTRING CURL (20 reps)**  
Bend arms at the elbow. Bring one foot up toward your rear end while straightening your arms so that your hands are down when your foot is up.

**Pro:** Not terribly noticeable.  
**Con:** Requires caution to avoid kicking things behind you.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**5 KNEE LIFT (20 reps)**  
Just like hamstring curls, except you lift your knee up in front as your arms go down.

**Pro:** Wakes up the hip flexors and quadriceps.  
**Con:** Requires extra concentration and coordination.

*Wardrobe warning: Impossible in a tight skirt; ill-advised in a short skirt.*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**6 HALLELUJAH (20 reps)**  
Sweep arms above your head and down again as you step side-to-side. Actually yelling, "Hallelujah!" is optional.

**Pro:** Made us smile. Lends a flash-mob feel to even the least coordinated group.  
**Con:** Not the slightest bit subtle.

*Wardrobe warning: Hemlines will rise on both skirts and shirts.*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**7 PUNCHING (20 reps)**  
While rocking foot to foot, punch with alternating arms. To reduce elbow stress, try not to fully straighten your arm.

**Pro:** Cathartic; an outlet for aggression.  
**Con:** Most workplaces do not allow you to actually hit anyone.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**8 DESK PUSHUP (10 reps)**  
Place hands on edge of desk, shoulder width apart, legs out behind you. Push off with as much force as you can.

**Pro:** Not noticeable from across the room. Tough, in a good way.  
**Con:** First, make sure your desk doesn't slide easily.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**9 SIDE LUNGE (10 per side)**  
Take a big step to one side. Point toes forward and bend one knee, keeping other leg straight. Push back up.

**Pro:** Doesn't attract much attention.  
**Con:** Can be hard on knees.

*Wardrobe warning: Difficult (and risky) in pencil skirts, tight pants and heels.*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**10 JUMP SQUATS (10)**  
Make sure you have space in front of you. Bend into a half-squat with your arms behind you, then jump and swing your arms up as if you're celebrating.

**Pro:** Best calorie-burner of the moves we tried.  
**Con:** Tall people (or high-hopping short people) will hit eight-foot ceilings.

*Wardrobe warning: Major risk of exposure in a billowy skirt or untucked shirt.*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**11 CHAIR DIPS (10)**  
With your legs out in front of you, grab the edge of a chair (or desk) and lift yourself down in front of it and back up. At the end, you will be conveniently back in your seat.

**Pro:** The most discreet of the bunch. Really works triceps.  
**Con:** Can bother wrists. Be careful if your chair has wheels!

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

**12 WALK (10 min.)**  
Lap your block or a floor of your office. Try for a pace of 100 steps per minute, which is easy if you don't stop to play with tchotchkes on other people's desks.

**Pro:** No one will notice. Great excuse for a stroll to Starbucks.  
**Con:** Indoor laps get old; outside, you're at the mercy of the weather. Takes more time than a few quick moves at your desk.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |