

CHAIR REPAIR

UNDOING THE EFFECTS OF SITTING

Modern life makes it easy to sit for long stretches.

Prolonged sitting reduces blood flow, tightens the hips, weakens the glutes and core, and can leave you feeling foggy or stiff. Over the years, this pattern raises risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and earlier mortality, even if you exercise.

A study of more than 480,000 adults found that workers who mostly sat had a 16% higher risk of all-cause mortality and a 34% higher risk of cardiovascular mortality, compared with workers who mostly stood or moved. However, the study also found that leisure-time physical activity significantly offset much of this risk, highlighting movement as a powerful antidote.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO AVOID SITTING BUT TO INTERRUPT LONG SITTING BOUTS.

Simple strategies include:

- Standing or walking for 2–3 minutes every 30–60 minutes
- Shoulder rolls, neck stretches, or glute squeezes right in your chair
- Walking meetings or pacing during phone calls
- Alternating between sitting and standing, if you have an adjustable desk

These micro-moves support circulation, reduce stiffness, and help maintain better posture. Over an entire day, they add up to significant “light activity time,” which has strong health benefits independent of formal exercise.

Think of movement as nutrient-dense breaks sprinkled throughout your day.

Gao, W., Sanna, M., Chen, Y.-H., Tsai, M.-K., & Wen, C.-P. (2024). Occupational Sitting Time, Leisure Physical Activity, and All-Cause and Cardiovascular Disease Mortality. *JAMA Network Open*, 7(1), e2350680. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.50680>