

Average New Yorker sits seven hours each day: study

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Photo: Robin Foster

Rates may even be higher, and experts warn that too little daily activity can cause serious harm.

(HealthDay News)—They may live in the "City That Never Sleeps," but most New Yorkers still sit around a lot—an average of seven hours every day, a new study shows.

That estimate may be low, the study authors added, because the data was largely based on what people remembered or admitted to doing.

One local [health](#) expert expressed concern.

"With simply [sitting](#) more than three hours a day, there is a decrease [in] life expectancy," said Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, director of Women's Heart Health at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. "Moving has become a critical issue for the health of New York, and getting up and

walking or taking the stairs needs to be a part of the routine."

The study, appearing May 28 in the publication *Preventing Chronic Disease*, was led by Stella Yi of the New York University School of Medicine, with help from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Her team looked at the results of a 2010-2011 survey of almost 3,600 New Yorkers, as well as data from 667 people who agreed to wear gadgets aimed at gauging their time spent moving—or not.

The self-reports from the survey found that people averaged about four hours of sitting in the daytime and another three hours in the evening hours. Residents of the borough of Manhattan spent even more time—about eight hours per day—on their backsides, the study found.

Self-reported sitting time was highest among people 65 and older (nearly nine hours), but there was no difference between the sexes in terms of time spent sitting, the researchers said.

Rates were even higher when Yi's team focused on those who wore the movement-tracking gadgets. On average, those participants were found to be sitting for more than eight hours per day, the team found.

The bottom line, according to the researchers: "Interventions for decreasing sitting time are needed to improve health outcomes across all groups."

Dr. Howard Selinger is chair of family medicine at Quinnipiac University School of Medicine in Hamden, Conn. He stressed that numerous studies have revealed the dangers of parking in sofas and chairs.

"Prolonged sitting has many unhealthy repercussions," he said, including "obesity, related diabetes, hypertension, severe varicose veins, chronic leg swelling and chronic skin changes with darkening and leg ulcers."

Steinbaum agreed. "We have heard it said, 'sitting is the new smoking,' " she said. "This is a critical health issue that people need to be aware of so they can make the changes needed to become less sedentary."

More information: The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute offers a [guide to physical activity](#).

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