

Experts offer little tips to make big changes in work health

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When it comes to taking a physical activity break at work, it's more about the frequency than duration. That's advice Kansas State University experts in human nutrition and kinesiology are offering to employees working in a sedentary environment who are looking to improve their health.

"When people sit for a long period of time, our body turns off an enzyme called lipoprotein lipase, which helps take in fat and use it for energy," said Sara Rosenkranz, research assistant professor of [human](#)

[nutrition](#). "Essentially what happens is that enzyme goes away and stops allowing us to uptake the fat that's circulating in our blood and use it for fuel. We also know physiologically that sitting for long periods of time will actually reduce [insulin sensitivity](#) and increase circulating triglycerides. These are two things we know are very highly associated with poor chronic health in the long term."

But Rosenkranz says lots of little changes in a daily work routine can add up to a big change.

Get up and stand or take a walk at least once an hour, suggests Emily Mailey, assistant professor of kinesiology and director of the Physical Activity Intervention Research Lab.

"When it comes to sitting time, frequent interruptions is what's really important. We want to break up those long, prolonged bouts of sitting and get people up and moving more throughout the day," she said.

Mailey recommends setting a prompt on your computer to remind you to get up and move. Other ways she suggests to incorporate movement into your work activities:

- Send work to a remote printer.
- Use a restroom on another floor.
- Visit a co-worker's office instead of sending an email.
- Park further away.
- Take a walk with co-workers.

"Sometimes I think it takes a cultural change because it's really easy to maintain what we all do," Rosenkranz said. "It's also important to remember that it is not just about increasing physical activity. The research is unequivocal that both physical activity and diet are essential in terms of energy balance and health outcomes. Watching what you eat

is actually a way that people can make a bigger difference in terms of an energy balance equation. It's a lot easier for some people to cut out calories as opposed to expending more energy through [physical activity](#)."

Provided by Kansas State University

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