

Stand and deliver at work with activity-promoting desks

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Associate Professor Nicholas Gilson using his walking desk. Credit: University of Queensland

Office workers who use sit-stand or treadmill desks are on track to being more productive and attentive with fewer signs of workplace stress than their sedentary chair-dwelling colleagues.

University of Queensland School of Human Movement and Nutrition Sciences researcher Associate Professor Nicholas Gilson has been studying the effects activity-promoting desks have on [worker productivity](#).

"Previous research on activity-promoting desks has mainly focused on the health benefits for employees who sit less during the work day," Dr Gilson said.

"We have gone one step further and investigated the associations between sitting all day and the productivity of workers.

"Desks that allow workers to alternate between sitting and standing or walking have shown beneficial effects that contribute to work productivity and successful business outcomes.

"We found people who use activity-promoting desks were more able to focus on urgent tasks, avoid non-urgent tasks and manage stress better than people sitting at a desk all day."

The study uncovered differences in attention allocation and [stress response](#) between workers who sat for the duration of a typical work day

and those who used a sit-stand or walking desk every 30 minutes.

Brain activity was measured using an electroencephalography (EEG) cap to assess attention during computer tasks, and saliva samples were taken to measure [stress levels](#).

"The workers who used sit-stand or walking desks allocated attention most effectively and had lower levels of cortisol – known as the "stress hormone" – in their saliva," Dr Gilson said.

More information: Nicholas D. Gilson et al. Do Sitting, Standing or Treadmill Desks Impact Psychobiological Indicators of Work Productivity?, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* (2017). [DOI: 10.1123/jpah.2016-0712](#)

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