

Want to reduce stroke risk? Sit less. Move more. Do chores.

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Imagine watching "The Batman" movie back-to-back four times every day or driving a whopping 390 miles each way on a daily commute. Either uncomfortable choice will take about 12 hours—or the same amount of time most Americans stay seated throughout any day.

The dangerous consequences of prolonged inactivity in humans are widely known. Too much sitting leads to an increased risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and other [chronic illnesses](#), including depression. To offset the severe side effects of a sedentary lifestyle, doctors recommend adults complete at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise a week.

However, a new study from San Diego State University, published in *JAMA Network Open*, found that doing lighter intensity [daily activities](#) such as household chores can significantly reduce the risk of [stroke](#).

"Light-intensity physical activity can include vacuuming, sweeping the floor, washing the car, leisure strolling, stretching, or playing catch," said Steven Hooker, dean of SDSU's College of Health and Human Services and lead researcher of the cohort study.

"We observed that both physical activity and being sedentary independently impacted stroke risk. Our research demonstrates that strategies for stroke prevention should focus on both."

Hooker and his research colleagues measured both the amount of time participants were sedentary and the duration and intensity of physical activity in 7,600 adults ages 45 and older and then compared the data to the incidence of strokes in participants over seven years.

They found those who were sedentary for 13 hours or more a day had a 44% increased risk of having a stroke.

"The findings are more potent because the activity and sedentary behaviors were measured with an accelerometer, providing substantially more [accurate data](#) than previous studies that relied on self-reported measures," said Hooker, a former coordinator of the California Active Aging Project with a history of research into [healthy lifestyles](#) for [older](#)

[adults](#).

Study participants wore a hip-mounted accelerometer, a sensitive motion detector that precisely recorded physical activity and the duration of sitting and inactivity.

Even though smartphones and smartwatches valiantly attempt to motivate Americans to move more, a shocking percentage of adults don't exercise enough. The CDC reports only 23% of U.S. adults meet the weekly recommendations for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.

But, if 10,000 steps a day or closing an exercise ring on your watch seem out of reach, Hooker said getting up and doing even ten minutes of light to moderate [physical activity](#) a few times throughout the day is an [effective strategy](#) in reducing the likelihood of having a stroke.

"For overall heart and brain health, move more within your capacity, and sit less," said Hooker.

More information: Steven P. Hooker et al, Association of Accelerometer-Measured Sedentary Time and Physical Activity With Risk of Stroke Among US Adults, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.15385](#)

Provided by San Diego State University

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