

Evening activity breaks from screen time better for health, shows study.

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Breaking up long periods of sitting in the evening can result in lower blood sugar and insulin levels in healthy adults, a new University of Otago study has found.

The research, led by Ph.D. student Jennifer Gale, found regular activity breaks made during a prolonged period of sitting time in the evening, lowered [plasma glucose](#) and [insulin](#) by 31.5% and 26.6% respectively in a group of healthy adults.

Gale, who is based in the Department of Human Nutrition, says it's known that increased sitting time is associated with an increased risk of several diseases such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

"We also know that breaking up [sedentary time](#) during the day can reduce levels of glucose, insulin and fat in the blood, however many of us spend the longest time sitting without interruption in the evening.

"The average time spent watching Netflix, as an example, is estimated to be over three hours per day, per subscriber."

In addition, Gale says we often have our largest meal during the evening and the action of insulin, the hormone that helps clear sugar from the blood, is lower at that time of day.

"When these daily lower [insulin levels](#) coincide with our longest period of sedentary behavior, these combined factors can promote a high-risk environment for the development of disease."

Results from what the researchers call the 'Netflix and Move Study,' are published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

The research, in which 30 [healthy adults](#) aged between 19 and 39 took part, involved the participants interrupting four hours of sitting time in the evening with three minutes of simple resistance exercises every thirty minutes.

The results show that performing light body weight resistance exercises

regularly, improves the uptake of sugar from the [blood](#) and therefore has the potential to meaningfully impact glycemic control.

"Our findings are consistent with the current guidelines to 'sit less and move more' and highlight how almost everyone could benefit from breaking up their sitting time in the [evening](#)," Gale says.

The authors recommend online streaming services consider building regular prompts into their applications to encourage people to interrupt periods of sitting with short activity breaks.

More information: Jennifer T. Gale et al, Breaking Up Evening Sitting with Resistance Activity Improves Postprandial Glycemic Response: A Randomized Crossover Study, *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* (2023). [DOI: 10.1249/MSS.00000000000003166](https://doi.org/10.1249/MSS.00000000000003166)

Provided by University of Otago

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