

Three ways to move more while working from home

8 January 2021, by Julie Broderick



Replace two hours of sitting with standing. Credit: [Burlingham/ Shutterstock](#)

Though people with office jobs often sit for [up to 80% of the working day](#), many still manage to get an average of [3,616 steps daily](#), largely thanks to many small opportunities for activity throughout the day. But with many of us now working from home during the pandemic, this means that any exercise we might have had during our day—whether cycling to work, or walking to get lunch—may no longer exist. While the way we work has changed, that doesn't mean we can't easily find ways to be more active during our work day if we look at how we managed to get active while working in an office.

Here are a few things you can try to get you to move more while working from home:

1. Stand up and move while working

Prolonged standing burns more calories than sitting. While this won't be enough to tackle weight loss, replacing two hours sitting each day with standing can burn up to [130 calories a week](#), and may [improve concentration](#). [Standing more often](#) during your day may also improve glucose, insulin

levels, and blood pressure in the long term.

You may be surprised to hear that [fidgeting is also good]. These small, regular movements (such as tapping your foot or shifting position) while sitting also burn more calories by increasing energy expenditure by [5–10% above resting values](#).

Experts recommend [office workers](#) try to get at least [two hours a day standing](#) or moving around during [work hours](#)—and should build up to four hours, if possible. To start out, try adding at least [30 to 60 minutes](#) of standing into your workday, perhaps by alternating between fifteen minutes standing followed by fifteen minutes sitting. Or perhaps try taking all your calls or meetings while standing.

2. Take "exercise snacks"

Short bursts of exercise—or "exercise snacks"—are beneficial for your [health](#). Previously, it was thought bouts of exercise needed to last longer than ten minutes to be beneficial to our health—but [recent research](#) indicates activity of any duration is good for health. Regular exercise also improves memory and even has brain-enhancing effects by improving memory and reducing inflammation in the brain (which can lead to conditions such as Alzheimer's).

Try to take regular active movement breaks or exercise snacks during your day. For example, climbing the stairs can be a useful [exercise](#), with research showing ten minutes of stair climbing can have a [similar effect on energy levels](#) as a cup of coffee does in sleep-deprived people. Vigorously climbing three flights of stairs (60 steps) at least three times a day—separated by one to four hours of rest—may [improve your fitness](#).

A lower impact option would be to walk a few laps around your house. Even something as simple as moving rooms to refill your water glass or tea cup can help you get a bit of extra movement in.

3. Exercise at lunchtime (outdoors if possible)

Emerging evidence shows that [going outside to exercise](#) during the day in [natural settings](#) (such as parks, fields, or near rivers or coastlines) can be beneficial to our mental health and cognitive ability.

But many people aren't lucky enough to live near easily accessible natural environments. Fortunately, research shows that even getting out in the fresh air for a short walk or run is [health enhancing](#). If you can't get outside during lunch, exercising indoors can still be beneficial to your health.

Remember, any movement is better than none—and the more the better. While you are working from home, make a special effort to build activity back into your day for both your mental and physical health.

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