








Ergotron JustStand[®] Survey & Index Report



-  **Sleeping**
8 Hours
-  **Sitting at Work**
7.5 Hours
-  **Watching TV**
1.5 Hours
-  **Leisure Time**
1.5 Hours
-  **On Home Computer**
1.5 Hours
-  **Eating**
1 Hour
-  **Active/Standing**
3 Hours

Almost 70% of Full-Time American Workers Hate Sitting, But They Do it All Day, Every Day, Anyway

Most aren't aware of the metabolic toll it has on their body, or of "Sitting Disease" Study concludes: they want to sit less and stand more

Executive Summary:

Most Americans have to sit all day at work and they despise it. A new independent survey that Ergotron commissioned found that nearly 70 percent of full-time American workers hate sitting, yet 86 percent are required to do it all day, every day. This is Ergotron's second survey in three years on the effects of prolonged sitting on office workers.

When respondents were asked if they find excuses to break up all that sitting, and if so to estimate the

approximate amount per day they spend finding excuses, 24 percent said they take up to 15 minutes and 14 percent said up to an hour. More than half (56 percent) use "getting food" as their excuse; and nearly 85 percent take these breaks for symptom relief from the discomfort

85% take breaks at work for symptom relief.

This loss in productivity ranges from:

1-15 minutes	36%
16-30 minutes	26%
31 minutes to an hour	18%
1-2 hours	4%

associated with sitting while working. Sixteen percent take breaks because of a medical condition that is exacerbated by prolonged periods of sitting.

Of those queried about leaving their desks for symptom relief, 36 percent reported their breaks ranged from one to 15 minute periods; up to 30 minutes (26 percent); up to an hour (18 percent); and up to 2 hours (4 percent). This disruption to employee workflow impacts personal and corporate productivity, and has statistical relevance when calculated over an entire employee base with sitting cultures.

When considering the costs over a broader sample, these losses in productivity (due to the sedentary nature of the work day) could have a significant impact on the company's overall performance and bottom line.

How much do Americans hate sitting?

When asked to choose among sacrifices they would make to "sit less at work," 30 percent responded that they would rather go without coffee for a week. For caffeine lovers, this is significant. They would also be willing to give up social media (24 percent) or an entire vacation day (11 percent); go to the doctor or the dentist (19 percent); or, work a 14-hour day (9 percent) just to reduce time spent sitting while working.

And although 93 percent of those asked didn't know about "Sitting Disease" (the term coined by the scientific community and commonly used when referring to metabolic syndrome and the ill-effects of an overly sedentary lifestyle), 48 percent believed they could be at risk for it, and 74 percent believed that sitting too much could lead to an early death.

Exercise is important to quality and longevity of life, yet most of us aren't doing enough of it to overcome so much sitting.

While most people understand the importance of daily physical activity, Americans are not devoting a large amount of their budget to staying active. Whether this is due to economic downturn or other reasons, the majority spend just \$10 per month on exercise or physical activity. Only 31 percent report going to the gym on a regular basis. Eighty-eight percent do incorporate at least 30 minutes of recommended physical activity per day doing activities like: swimming, hiking, climbing (22 percent); running and home workouts (tied at 21 percent); attending fitness classes (14 percent); and using fitness tools like Fitbit® (6 percent).



It's called Sitting Disease. Daily exercise is not enough to counteract excessive sitting. If you are physically inactive, you are at "significant risk"; and if you are physically active, you're still at "high risk."

But even that amount exercise is not enough to counteract eight to ten hours of sitting. Metabolic researchers like Dr. Genevieve Healy, of the University of Queensland in Australia, suggest that "we've become so sedentary that 30 minutes a day at the gym may not do enough to counteract the detrimental effects of eight, nine, or 10 hours of sitting." She and others have been cited as saying that the cure for sitting too much is not more exercise.

What many don't know is what metabolic researchers suggest now: those who are self-reportedly physically "inactive" and sitting greater than 6 hours a day are at significant risk for developing the chronic illnesses linked to Sitting Disease; and those who are self-reportedly "active" (spending at least 30 minutes per day exercising), but who sit greater than 6 hours a day, are still at "high risk."

American businesses are starting to make changes.

In June 2013, the American Medical Association (AMA) adopted a policy recognizing the potential risks of prolonged sitting, encouraging employers and employees to find available alternative solutions to sitting.

The good news is that workers appear to be highly receptive to changing the sedentary nature of their day

Its recommendations were a clear message to the business community that the need for healthier working environments has to be addressed. Of the increasing number of corporations actively exploring sit-stand options today, many report that they are starkly aware of the potential costs for not individualizing the workspace or creating a healthier, more active culture that reduces sitting time throughout the work environment.

The good news is that workers appear to be highly receptive to changing the sedentary nature of their day: 95 percent indicated they would be willing to reduce the hours they sit per day if it would improve their health or life expectancy. More than half (53 percent) said that they would rather stand more while working than do 30 minutes of cardio [exercise] each day.

Education is key to heightening the awareness of Sitting Disease and the alternatives that exist to reduce sitting.

One only has to Google “standing desks,” “sit-stand workstations” or “height adjustable desks” to see the number of advanced solutions available today

Standing is one of the simplest changes one can make to reduce the metabolic health hazards linked to sitting. Standing more is proven to increase energy, burn extra calories, tone muscles, improve posture, increase blood flow, reduce blood sugar levels and ramp up metabolism—reversing the potential ills researchers link to the top four killers in America today. Research also suggests that these metabolic improvements can lead to increased focus and attentiveness, improved energy levels while reducing fatigue and enhance mood state—all key factors in improved performance and productivity. And today’s alternatives to seating, like sit-stand workstations, are more affordable than most would think, producing a return on the investment that has long-term gains.

While this study further validates that Americans want to sit less while working, awareness of the alternatives like the AMA now recommends is still lacking, pointing to a distinct need for better education of both employees and employers.

Case in point, of the respondents queried, only 37 percent are aware of the existence of sit-stand solutions to reduce sitting time and enable a sit-stand, on demand, work routine. Of this population, only 11 percent have actually requested a sit-stand product at work.

Many solutions to reduce sitting time and influence a sit-stand work routine exist. One only has to Google “standing desks,” “sit-stand workstations” or “height-adjustable desks” to see the number of advanced solutions available today which are designed to reduce sitting, and enable more standing time while working.

There is a marked skepticism that sit-stand computing may be a fad, and the challenge lays heavily on the medical and research community to change this perception. Therefore, it is not surprising that of the early adopters of sit-stand computing across a broader employee base, health insurance providers are taking the lead.

Defining the Problem of Sitting Disease

In recent decades lifestyles have become drastically more sedentary, especially among knowledge workers who sit at their desks during the day, commute by car, and relax on the couch watching TV or on their computers in the evenings.

A wave of scientific studies has shown that:

- *Prolonged sitting increases the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and death*
- *People who sit for more than 11 hours a day have a 40 percent increased risk of death in the next three years compared with people who sit for less than four hours*
- *Workers who have been in sedentary roles for more than 10 years have double the risk of colon cancer*
- *Prolonged sitting is an independent risk factor, even if engaging in regular exercise*
- *Long periods of sitting are a suspected risk factor in the development of musculoskeletal disorders*

Conclusion

As this study establishes, Americans despise sitting. But most still do it all day, every day, anyway. This is not due to choice. Most would prefer to sit less if given an option. Caffeine addicts would give up a week of their lattes and, in a country perceivably in need of more vacation time, some would give up an entire vacation day to have the option to stand more.

Lack of proper education, misconceptions about alternatives to seating and their ease of use, deployment and affordability, along with not fully comprehending the immediate and long-term impacts to employee health and its natural trickle effect over to a company's bottom line, establishes that the business community is only in the early phase of making change.

The AMA policy adoption has broadened the opportunity to create awareness and this study helps to validate that employees want seating alternatives. In order for American businesses to influence change that can produce less sedentary, more active employees and a healthier organization overall, creating a "culture of movement" is necessary.

Three years ago, emerging research from the American Cancer Society showing links between sedentary lifestyles and poor health prompted Ergotron to begin tracking how much people are sitting and their general awareness of the impact it has on their health. As part of this effort, Ergotron launched JustStand.org as a resource site and created the Annual JustStand Wellness Summit – now celebrating its 3rd year – to connect international research communities and businesses to explore the challenges as well as help advance corporate understanding of the true impact of sitting on employee health.



Ergotron sees Sitting Disease as a global crisis and commissioned this JustStand® Survey to heighten awareness and educate the populace on its dangers. What's more, Ergotron designed the JustStand Index to benchmark Americans future sentience around sitting. Today, the vast majority of people are not aware of Sitting Disease:

- *7 percent of Americans are aware of Sitting Disease*
- *48 percent of Americans believe they could be at risk of Sitting Disease*
- *74 percent of Americans believe sitting to much could lead to early death*

The more detailed JustStand Survey results are on the next page.

Methodology

The Ergotron JustStand® survey was fielded by independent panel research firm Research Now from June 21 to June 25, 2013. The responses were generated from a survey of 1,000 people who self-identified as full-time employees. All respondents are age 18 or older and living in the continental United States. The margin of error for the survey is plus or minus 3.1 percent. This is Ergotron's second survey in three years on the effects of sitting on office workers. The 2010 survey can be found [here](#).

Overall Survey Results:

① *People are sitting almost all day at work, and a significant amount of time at home. They don't like it, they know it's bad for them, but they are doing it anyway.*

- 86 percent of those surveyed who work full time are required to sit all day
- 67 percent of those surveyed dislike sitting all day
- 74 percent believe they could be subject to an earlier death due to sitting so much
- 96 percent said they would be willing to reduce sitting
- On top of all of that sitting at work, the majority of respondents:
 - Spend up to 15 minutes sitting to eat breakfast (70 percent)
 - Spend between 15 and 30 minutes commuting (30 percent)
 - Sit through their lunch breaks (42 percent)
 - Sit through dinner for nearly a half hour (50 percent)
 - And then sit for another 1-2 hours watching TV (36 percent)
 - About 10 percent spend another 1-2 hours sitting while gaming
 - 25 percent take a sedentary approach to leisure time, such as reading for 1-2 hours
 - And 29 percent use the computer at home for personal or work use for 1-2 hours

② *People are making an effort to incorporate some physical activity into their day. But it's not nearly enough.*

- 88 percent are incorporating more than 30 minutes per day of physical activity. Of them:
 - 36 percent have 30 minutes or more
 - 32 percent have an hour
 - 13 percent have 90 minutes
 - 7 percent have 2 hours or more
 - 12 percent have none
- The most common forms of physical activity are:
 - Going for walks (69 percent)
 - Going to the gym (31 percent)
 - Other activities such as swimming, hiking, climbing (22 percent)
 - Running and home workouts (tied at 21 percent)
 - Attending fitness classes (14 percent)
 - Use apps such as Fitbit (6 percent)

③ *People are not devoting a large amount of their budget to staying active*

- 56 percent spend less than \$10 per month
- 18 percent spend \$11-30 per month
- 12 percent spend \$31-50 per month

- 6 percent spend \$51-75 per month
 - 4 percent spend \$76-100 per month
 - 4 percent spend more than \$100 per month
- ④ ***If people are standing at work, it's for short periods***
- 24 percent stand only up to 15 minutes per day
 - 22 percent stand 15-30 minutes
 - 14 percent stand 30 min. to an hour
- ⑤ ***For some, sitting at work is making them sicker and they take breaks for symptom relief***
- 16 percent say they have a medical condition that is exacerbated by sitting while computing
 - 85 percent take breaks for symptom relief. This loss in productivity ranges from:
 - 1-15 minutes (36 percent)
 - 16-30 minutes (26 percent)
 - 31 minutes to an hour (18 percent)
 - 1-2 hours (4 percent)
 - The top 5 most common excuses for breaks are:
 - Going to the bathroom (92 percent)
 - Getting a drink (80 percent)
 - Stretching (64 percent)
 - Going to the printer (61 percent)
 - Getting food (56 percent)
- ⑥ ***Respondents would rather stand more than have to do more cardio exercise***
- 53 percent would rather stand more and sit less throughout the day than do exercise
- ⑦ ***People hate sitting so much, they would rather:***
- Go without coffee for a week (30 percent)
 - Give up social media for a week (24 percent)
 - Go to the doctor or the dentist (19 percent)
 - Give up a vacation day (11 percent)
 - Work a 14-hour day (9 percent)
- ⑧ ***If it would improve their health or life expectancy, 95 percent would be willing to reduce the number of hours they sit per day***
- ⑨ ***The vast majority of people are not aware of Sitting Disease but could be at risk for it***
- 93 percent do not know what Sitting Disease is
 - But nearly half (48 percent) believe they could be at risk for it
 - And 74 percent believe that too much sitting could lead to early death
- ⑩ ***63 percent are not aware of sit/stand computing options for the office***
- 11 percent said they have requested a sit/stand product at work
 - 45 percent said they have not requested a sit/stand product yet, but have interest in using them
 - Go to the doctor or the dentist (19 percent)
 - Give up a vacation day (11 percent)
 - Work a 14-hour day (9 percent)



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**Americas Sales and
Corporate Headquarters**

St. Paul, MN USA
(800) 888-8458
+1-651-681-7600
www.ergotron.com
sales@ergotron.com

EMEA Sales

Amersfoort, The Netherlands
+31 33 45 45 600
www.ergotron.com
info.eu@ergotron.com

APAC Sales

Tokyo, Japan
www.ergotron.com
apaccustomerservice@ergotron.com

Worldwide OEM Sales

www.ergotron.com
info.oem@ergotron.com