

Here's the real kicker – exercise does not reduce the risk!

It's not about going to the gym for an hour or taking a walk everyday it's about the expenditure of energy throughout the day. Yes, that's right. It's about movement throughout the course of your day.

For every hour that we spend sitting and watching television, we take up to 22 minutes from our lifespan.

Sitting 6 hours or more every day increases your risk of mortality by 40% more than people who spend less than 3 hours of their day sitting.

If you're still not convinced that sitting could be the new smoking, check out these amazing facts summarized from [diygenius!](#)

WHY? How Can Sitting Cause So Much Harm?

As soon as our backsides hit the chair, several metabolic and physical changes start to occur:

- Our resting metabolic rate plummets, which means that your body burns minimal calories. This helps to explain why increased sitting is associated with higher rates of obesity.
- The electrical activity in our leg muscles drops right off.
- Blood circulation in our legs becomes sluggish. (Hello, varicose veins!)
- Prolonged sitting also shortens, tightens and weakens our hip flexors. It also makes our glute muscles 'switch off'.
- Our bodies produce higher levels of triglycerides and C-reactive protein (which is indicative of inflammation).

Other studies have also shown that women who sit six hours per day or more experience a drop in bone density of 1% each year.

So what can we do about it?

It's simple yet complicated. First we have to reduce the amount of time we spend sitting on our butts, which means more movement right? Sounds easy but much of our culture is centered around sitting. Whether it's meetings at the office, social gatherings - which tend to center around eating and most of us like to decompress after a long day in front of the television or with a good book.

“Sitting is so incredibly prevalent that we don't even question how much we're doing it. And because everyone else is doing it, it doesn't even occur to us that it's not OK.”

-Nilofer Merchant TED 2013

