

TV Time!

Sedentary sitting time ups risks

Higher levels of sedentary behavior, or too much sitting, is a risk factor for cardiometabolic diseases and early mortality. We have been emphasizing less sitting during work hours and some of us have started to use standing desks to help combat this problem. But what other factors can lead to more health risks due to sedentary behaviors? This study was a nationwide survey of 2640 adults between the ages of 20-75 years. This was a more detailed survey than usually done and gave some shocking results regarding how inactive we are and when we are most inactive!



Abstract

- Purpose: Higher levels of sedentary behavior are associated with early mortality, but the distribution of sedentary time by classes of behavior and demographic groups is poorly described in U.S. adults. To quantify the amount and sources of sedentary time in U.S. adults, we conducted a nationwide survey using a novel validated self-administered previous-day recall method and compared these values with a commonly used sitting time question.
- Methods: Participants from the AmeriSpeak panel 20 to 75 yr of age (N = 2640) completed up to two activities completed over time in 24 h (ACT24) previous-day recalls. Recalls were conducted on randomly selected days in October and November 2019. Survey sample designs were applied to reflect the U.S. population.
- Results: Mean age was 45.3 yr, 51% were female, 67% non-Hispanic White, and 37% had a body mass index of ≥ 30 kg·m⁻². U.S. adults reported a mean 9.5 h·d⁻¹ of sedentary time (95% confidence interval = 9.4, 9.7 h·d⁻¹), which was 34% more than reported using a common surveillance measure (P < 0.01). Most daily sedentary time was accumulated in the leisure and work life domains, with leisure accounting for 47% (4.3 h·d⁻¹, 95% confidence interval = 4.2, 4.5 h·d⁻¹) of the total sedentary time. Eighty-two percent of leisure time was spent sedentary, mainly watching television/videos or engaged in Internet/computer use.
- Conclusions: U.S. adults appear to spend more time in sedentary behavior than previously thought, and the majority of this time is accumulated at work and in leisure time. Reducing sedentary screen time during leisure in favor of physically active could be an important intervention target in the effort to increase physical activity in U.S. adults.

It has been suggested that sedentary behavior should be evaluated like we do other health behaviors. Many of us are proud of our 30–60-minute exercise routines a few days/week. But what is one of the biggest risks to our overall health? The answer is sedentary behavior. This study did a more detailed survey of individual activity levels and found that U.S. adults reported spending an average of 9.5 hours sedentary daily. This is 34% higher than previous surveys have shown. Many of us blame our work environment but this study found that nearly half (47%) of the sedentary time was during leisure time. Most of this time (82%) was spent watching television or engaged in internet/computer use. For me, the take-home point is that most of us have plenty of time to get some physical activity! We may not be able to lessen our sedentary time at work, but if we are on average spending around 4.5 leisure hours daily sitting while watching TV, gaming, or internet browsing, we can surely find some time to be active.

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