



# The Risk Connection

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## Do You Have Sitting Disease?

### Presented by Risk Management & Employee Benefits

- News You Can Use
- Safety Information
- Benefits Information
- Wellness Articles
- Training Schedule

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Let's Stretch	2
Spring Gardening Tips	3
Express Scripts	3
Training Schedule	4
The Safety Corner	4

A sedentary lifestyle, or sitting disease, is one with zero or irregular physical activity and contributes to an increased risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity. Sedentary activities include: sitting, reading, watching television, playing video games and computer use.

With increasing research linking a sedentary lifestyle to poor health, how can one become more physically active throughout the day when they're locked into sitting time at work and drive time? Simply move more and sit less! Start by incorporating simple, non-exercise activities such as: climbing the stairs instead of using the elevators, parking in the back of the parking lot, taking short walking breaks, getting up every hour or two and stretching or walking, standing up while talking on the phone, walking and talking rather than sending an email to your co-worker, dancing while cleaning your house, or choosing to walk to the store rather than taking

the car. Whatever method you choose, the idea is to move more!

Do You Have Sitting Disease? Here are some solutions:

1. Get NEAT. Fill your day with Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (NEAT). NEAT includes stretching, turning and bending. Aim for 10 minutes of NEAT each hour.
2. Think beyond your workout. Even if you exercise at lunch, you may still be sitting too much. Aim for a whole-day approach to physical activity.
3. Mix standing and sitting.
4. Take regular breaks and stretch your muscles.
5. Have a question for your co-worker down the hall? Don't send an e-mail; walk to their cubicle and ask face to face.
6. Adopt new habits, such as standing whenever you talk on the telephone. Ask co-workers to go for a walk during lunch instead of chat-



ting in the break room. Use the stairs instead of the elevator.

7. Rearrange the office. Start having walk-and-talk meetings with your co-workers rather than conference room meetings. Move trash cans out of cubicles to make people walk to throw out garbage.
8. Watch more television, but only if you vow to be active when you watch. Place your treadmill in front of the television, and only allow yourself to watch when you're walking. No exercise equipment? March in place or tidy the room while watching. Just don't be a couch potato. Research shows that the longer you sit watching television, the greater your waist circumference, and the higher your risk is of dying from cardiovascular disease.

Sources: WebMD and Delta Team-Care.

# Let's Stretch

Typical office employees spend the majority of their work lives sitting down and completing repetitive tasks day after day. While the jobs continue to get done, the repetitive, sedentary nature of many of our jobs has long-lasting consequences for the health of employees. So what kind of stretch regimen do you have at work? When polled, most employees stated that they do not stretch at all. Unfortunately, most of us only think of such things when we have some type of discomfort. If we started stretching and moving more prior to the onset of symptoms, there is a much better chance of avoiding such symptoms.

A simple way to start is to pick two set times during the day, say 11am and 4pm, stand up and do a couple of stretches. This will take about 1–2 minutes and then you are right back to work. After a week or so, add a similar regimen at 9am and 2pm. After 2–3 weeks, you have now created a habit wherein you have added 4 quick stretch breaks to your routine. Remember: start small, create healthy habits, and build on them. Below are some simple exercises and stretches from the Stanford University Environmental Health and Safety webpage.

**CAUTION:** If you have an injury or any type of reoccurring discomfort, you should immediately report your injury/ symptoms and obtain a medical evaluation. These stretching exercises are not provided to cure any existing problems but may help in preventing any future ones. Individuals with previous injury should consult with their personal physician before performing these exercises on a routine basis. Always obtain medical consent prior to starting an exercise program.

Exercises and stretches can help decrease the risk of developing an ergonomic injury. Physical fitness is an important aspect in overall health, so exercise should be integrated into your workday and daily life. Some basic workstation exercises and stretches are described below.

## Exercises and Stretches

### Eyes:

- Eyes around the Clock– Look straight ahead. Without moving your head or straining your eyes, focus on the one o'clock position of an imaginary clock in front of you. Focus on the two o'clock, three o'clock – all hours until you reach the twelve o'clock position. Perform the same exercise in a counterclockwise direction.
- Close eyes tightly for a second, and then open them widely (repeat several times). Refocus eyes momentarily on an object at least 20 feet away.

### Shoulders:

- Shoulder Circles – Lift your shoulders toward your head. Pinch the shoulder blades to roll the shoulders back, and let the shoulders drop down to the starting position. Try to move the shoulders in a circular fashion. Repeat as desired.
- Shoulder Shrugs – Lift your shoulders toward your head. Hold for 1–3 seconds and relax. Repeat as desired.
- Shoulder Pinches – Pinch your shoulder blades together. Hold for 1–3 seconds and relax. Repeat as desired.

### Hands:

- Catch and Release – Clench your fists slowly. Hold for a few seconds. Slowly open your hand and spread your fingers. Hold this position for a few seconds. Repeat as desired.
- Flex and Extend – Raise your arms out in front of you with your palms facing down and your fingers flat. Slowly extend your wrists and fingers so they are pointing up. Hold this position for a few seconds. Slowly lower wrists and fingers so that they are pointed toward the ground. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat as desired.
- Place hands together with fingers spread apart and fingertips at chin level. Slowly lower hands, peel them apart, and reverse the process. Repeat several times

### Neck:

- Slowly turn head to side and hold for 10 seconds. Alternate sides and repeat several times.
- Slowly tilt head to side and hold for 5–10 seconds. Alternate sides and repeat several times.

### Low Back:

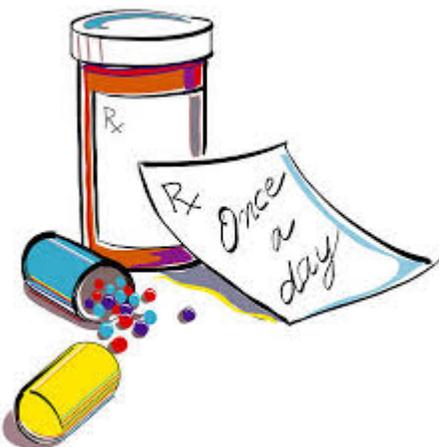
- Stand from chair. With hands on hips and feet about shoulder width apart, slowly lean hips forward and shoulders slightly back. Hold the stretch for 5–10 seconds.

## Spring Gardening Tips

While gardening provides a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, engage in physical activity, and provide a sense of accomplishment, it is important to do so in a safe manner so you can enjoy that well-manicured yard. The most important safety point to consider is to have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Safety goggles/glasses should be used when operating lawn mowers, edgers and pick axes to break up that pesky hard soil. Gardening or work gloves can assist in lowering skin irritations, cuts, and certain contaminants. Lower your risk of sunburns and skin cancer by wearing wide-brimmed hats and sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. During hot weather, be sure to drink plenty of water, not because you thirst for it, but because you need it to keep the body hydrated. Stay away from alcohol and drinks with large amounts of sugar. Be mindful of your back. Avoid twisting and bending at the waist as this places a lot of stress on the back. Consider kneeling down to the ground when planting flowers or pulling weeds. Use long-handled tools to prevent bending. Break up large projects (e.g. moving large amounts of dirt, lifting numerous heavy bags of soil, carrying stones, etc.) to allow the back to recover and heal. With just some simple steps like these, you will be able to enjoy many relaxing days in the yard.



## Express Scripts For Workers' Comp



AARLA, the Third Party Administrator managing the County of Fresno workers' compensation claims, has contracted with Express Scripts for prescription services. If you are injured on the job and require medical treatment, you should be provided a First Fill Prescription Form by your supervisor after filing a claim. This form is included in our On-the Job Injury Packets and available on the Personnel Services/Risk Management/Workers' Compensation website. Please bring this form with you on your first trip to the pharmacy. There are several pharmacies listed on the form to choose from, including CVS, Walgreens, Target, Wal-Mart and Rite-Aid.

## Personnel Services Department

### Risk Management

County Plaza 16th Floor  
559-600-1850 Stop 188

### Employee Benefits

County Plaza 14th Floor  
559-600-1810 Stop 188

*To access previous copies of The Risk Connection please see the Risk Management website under Reports and Resources.*

## Safety Class Schedule

### Office Safety

3/27/14 9:00-11:00 AM

5/22/14 9:00-11:00 AM

### Back Safety

3/28/14 9:00-11:00 AM

5/21/14 9:00-11:00 AM

### Supervisor Safety

4/10/14 8:00-12:00 PM

### Hazard Communication

3/26/14 9:00-11:00 AM

5/23/14 9:00-11:00 AM

### Workplace Violence

4/9/14 9:00-11:00 AM

### Office Ergonomics

3/14/14 9:00-11:00 AM

4/24/14 9:00-11:00 AM

5/6/14 9:00-11:00 AM

### CPR and First Aid

3/7/14 8:30-4:00 PM

3/13/14 8:30-4:00 PM

3/21/14 8:30-4:00 PM

4/11/14 8:30-4:00 PM

4/18/14 8:30-4:00 PM

4/25/14 8:30-4:00 PM

5/2/14 8:30-4:00 PM

5/8/14 8:30-4:00 PM

Spaces for these classes may be reserved by emailing the Personnel-Training mailbox. All courses are free. See the Training Schedule on Personnel's Risk Management website for more information.

## The Safety Corner By Devon Benbrook, County Safety Officer

### Avoiding Seasonal Allergies

As we enter Spring, seasonal allergies (AKA hay fever and allergic rhinitis) can wreak havoc on our health. Here are some things to consider that may reduce your exposure to allergy triggers.

1. Keep your windows closed.
2. Stay indoors as much as possible on windy days.
3. Don't hang laundry outside as pollen can stick to clothing and sheets.
4. If high pollen counts are forecasted, start taking allergy medications before your symptoms start.
5. Pollen counts are highest early in the morning so avoid outdoor activity whenever possible during this time.
6. Use the air conditioning in your home and car.
7. Change the air filters in your home regularly.
8. Clean floors often with a vacuum that has a HEPA filter. Only empty vacuums outside.
9. Remember that mold is present everywhere but only thrives where there is a constant source of moisture. Leaks should be repaired.

If you've never had allergies but have started experiencing allergy type symptoms, you should consult with your physician. You might have allergies now and not even know it.