



GENERAL WELLNESS

# EIGHT AT-YOUR-DESK EXERCISES TO COMBAT RISKS OF SITTING

By *Your Health Staff*

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Sad but true: sitting has been called the new smoking in terms of its [potential to negatively affect our health](#). Comfy though it may be, sitting for long periods of time slows our blood flow and fat breakdown, increasing our risk of heart disease, blood clots and stroke. Routinely sitting for long stretches (say, at a desk all day) can also boost our body's insulin resistance, upping our risk for type 2 diabetes and obesity.

## Take Small Steps to Reclaim Your Health

The good news? Moving our bodies for just 20-30 minutes a day can make a huge positive impact on our health—and you don't have to get those workouts all in one go. [Studies](#) show that mini-workouts spread across the day are just as effective as longer continuous workouts when it comes to healthier living.

"Taking small steps toward a new exercise routine is a great way to reach larger goals," says Krissi Moore, a physical therapist with Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. "Use these simple tasks as a platform to increase your weekly activity a few minutes at a time."

## Exercise at Your Desk!

You can incorporate these bursts of vigorous exercise into existing parts of your routine, such as amping up the intensity for a few minutes during yard work, household chores or your daily walk. And for desk jockeys, remote workers and those stuck indoors during moody March weather, [Healthier 901](#) is serving up eight quick and easy exercises you can do without

even leaving your desk.

## Side Lunges

Ready to bring your quads and hamstrings online?

- Stand up straight, feet shoulder-width apart.
- With your right foot, take a big step to the side and squat down, bringing your thigh parallel to the ground (or as far as you can go without straining the muscle).
- Step your right foot back to the center; repeat on the left side.
- Aim for ten lunges on each side.

## Leg Lifts

This move is great for your quads, hip flexors and core.

- Sit tall with a "proud" posture.
- Lift your left leg out straight in front of you, aiming to raise your thigh up off the seat.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds, lower your left leg and repeat on the right side.
- Repeat for ten reps on each side.

## Calf Raises

Let's get those calves on the moooooove!

- Stand up straight, holding the edge of your desk or chair back for balance.
- Slowly raise up onto your toes, count to 5, and slowly return your heels to the floor.
- Try for 15 calf raises before returning your posterior to pasture.

## Glute Squeezes

Time to get our squeeze on ... no ifs, ands or "butts."

- Sit up straight in your chair, neck and head held high.
- Squeeze, or contract, your glutes (the muscles in your rear) as tightly as you can for 15-30 seconds, then relax.
- Get your squeeze on ten times in total.

## Desk (or Countertop) Pushups

Not a pushups fan? Don't knock this version 'til you've tried it. And speaking of trying—your triceps and chest will thank you for this move.

- Stand facing your desk. Place your hands flat on the surface, positioning them slightly wider than your shoulders.
- Straighten your arms, then lower yourself forward (read: lean in!) until your chest almost touches your desk.
- Use your arms to push yourself back to a starting position.
- Repeat 10-15 times.

## Wall Sits

Tough workday bringing you to your knees? Put it to good use!

- Stand up straight with your back against a wall.
- Slide your back down the wall until your knees and hips are bent at a 90° angle (like sitting up straight in a chair, minus the chair).
- Hold for 30-45 seconds before pushing yourself back up the wall to a standing position.
- Repeat 5-10 times.

## Bicep Curls

No hand weights handy? No problem! Grab something heavy off your desk (a 3-hole punch, a trophy, a paperweight, etc.).

- Stand up straight, holding a dumbbell or heavy object in your right hand with your right arm down by your side.
- Keeping your balance steady (read: don't shift your weight), bend your elbow inward, curling the weight or object up toward your shoulder.
- Pause and count to 5; then lower your arm to its starting position.
- Aim for 10-15 reps, then switch the object to your left hand and repeat.

## Jumping Jacks

A gym class classic! Get your whole body engaged with this exercise.

- Stand straight, feet shoulder-width apart and arms by your sides.
- Jump and extend your feet out on each side while raising your hands over your head (like making a snow angel, but standing up and sans snow).
- Jumping again, bring your arms down and your feet back to center.
- Lather, rinse, repeat at least ten times.



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By incorporating even a few of these exercises into your daily desk routine, you can dramatically decrease the health risks associated with prolonged periods of sitting—especially if you spread them out across your day.

**Pro tip:** set alarms to help remind you when it's time for a few minutes of movement!

The Healthier 901 app also offers free workouts on demand (think: everything from barre, low impact, and yoga to kickboxing, body weights, and dumbbells) for everyone who joins the movement.

Download the program's [free app](#) to take advantage of fitness on demand, step tracking, healthy lifestyle challenges and more.

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