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- Harvey S. Firestone

VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ **Newsletter**

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money. These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.

We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Sitting at work is bad, but is standing actually better?

By Deborah Kotz

If too much sitting is the modern health equivalent of smoking and more people are spending longer hours sitting in front of their office computers, are standing desks the solution to rising rates of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity? Or does simply replacing sitting all day with standing all day miss the mark?

The makers of standing desks – which cost a few hundred to several thousand dollars – have sold many consumers and companies on the notion that their products will reverse “sitting disease” and the health ills caused by spending an average of nine of our 14 waking hours in an office chair or on the couch.

More than a dozen studies conducted over the past decade suggest that too much sitting leads to more disability as we age, doubles the risk of diabetes and heart disease, and could even shorten our lifespan. For example, Harvard researchers found in a February study involving more than 92,000 women that the more time participants spent sitting at work, driving, or watching TV, the greater their risk of dying from heart disease, cancer, or strokes.

Such news may have contributed to a 50 percent rise in the sales of standing desks over the past year as more companies invest in them for their employees.

HubSpot, an inbound marketing software company in Cambridge, purchased sit/stand desks that raise and lower with the push of a button for all 650 employees this year after staffers started asking for them.

But occupational health specialists worry that office workers may have gotten the wrong message that standing in one place, rather than sitting at their desk, will help them shed extra pounds, improve their hearts, or stave off other negative effects of too much sitting.

“Standing all day isn’t the answer,” said Alan Hedge, a design and ergonomics professor at Cornell University. “That’s where we were 100 years ago, and we needed to develop chairs to prevent curvature of the spine, backaches, and varicose veins.”

While standing still burns a few more calories as our hearts work harder to circulate blood upward, it also puts more strain on our veins, backs, and joints, especially if we’re overweight.

“Studies haven’t yet determined how much standing helps healthwise,” said Dr. I-Min Lee, an associate epidemiologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital who has studied the risks of sedentary behavior. In population studies, researchers haven’t been able to determine whether the health benefits of reduced sitting time stem from moving around more or from standing still. And results on whether exercise reduces the health risks of sitting are conflicting.

A May study of nearly 17,000 Canadian adults found that those who reported the most time standing had a 33 percent lower risk of dying from any cause over 12 years compared to those who stood the least. But those who exercised at least two hours each week – even if they sat the rest of the time – enjoyed the same life-extending benefits as those who stood the most. The Harvard researchers, on the other hand, found in their study that regular exercise didn’t erase the increased death risk associated with prolonged sitting.

In terms of calorie burn and physical exertion, standing in one place is equivalent to 1.3 MET (a physiological measure expressing the energy cost of physical activities) compared to 1 MET for sitting. Walking at a 3 mile-per-hour pace is a 3.3 MET activity, while jogging is a 7 MET, which means it burns 7 times the energy than the body at rest.

“The calorie burn difference between standing and sitting is so small, it probably won’t make much difference in terms of weight loss,” Lee said.

But some obesity experts argue that standing at a workstation encourages us to move around more and, hence, burn significantly more calories.

In a June study, 28 office workers who were given a sit/stand desk for a month reduced their time spent in a sedentary position by 38 minutes a day compared to when they used a traditional desk. They also reported a mood boost, increased energy, and reduced fatigue.

“I think it’s correct to say we’re in the middle of a ‘stand up movement,’ but the emphasis needs to be on movement,” said the study author Dr. James Levine, director of the Mayo Clinic/

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CAREER HEALTH

Job satisfaction: How to make work more rewarding

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Stress mounts when job satisfaction falls. Here's a look at some of the causes of job dissatisfaction — and practical ways to boost job satisfaction.

Do you find yourself dreading the start of the workweek? Or wishing the current workday away? Are you no longer enthusiastic about your job?

In a challenging economy, you might not feel that you can simply change jobs — but you might be able to change how you think about your job to improve your job satisfaction.

Understand the link between work approach and job satisfaction

If you've gone sour on your job, think about what motivates and inspires you — and how you approach your work. For example:

It's a job. If you approach work as a job, you focus primarily on the financial rewards. The nature of the work might hold little interest for you. What's important is the money. If a job with more pay comes your way, you'll likely move on.

It's a career. If you approach work as a career, you're likely interested in advancement. Your current job might be a steppingstone to your ultimate goal. What's important is to be regarded as a success in your field.

It's a calling. If you approach your job as a calling, you focus on the work itself. You're less interested in financial gain or career advancement, preferring instead to find a sense of fulfillment from the work itself.

One approach isn't necessarily better, and you might find elements of all three perspectives important. Still, if you're unsatisfied with your job, it's helpful to reflect on why you work.

Think about what originally drew you to your current job, and whether it might be a factor in your lack of job satisfaction. Understanding what motivates you in your work can help you reframe your expectations and make choices to increase your satisfaction.

Consider strategies to improve job satisfaction

Regardless of why you work, there are strategies that can help breathe new life into your job. For example:

Create new challenges. Take on a project that will motivate you and give you a sense of control. Start

small before moving on to larger goals. Working on something you care about can boost your confidence and job satisfaction.

Mentor a colleague. Once you've mastered a job, you might find it too routine. Helping a new team member or an intern advance his or her skills can restore the challenge and the job satisfaction you desire.

Expand your skills. If you're feeling bored, ask your supervisor about cross-training. Perhaps you could train for new or additional tasks. If your company is launching a new project, volunteer for the team.

Learn from your mistakes. Don't let setbacks erode your job satisfaction. When you make a mistake at work, learn from it and try again. If you receive a less than stellar appraisal, ask about attending seminars or taking classes to improve your performance.

Stay positive. Use positive thinking to reframe your thoughts about your job. When you catch yourself thinking your job is terrible, stop the thought in its tracks. Remember, everyone encounters good days and bad days on the job.

Be grateful. Gratitude can help you focus on what's positive about your job. Ask yourself, "What am I grateful for at work today?" If it's only that you're having lunch with a friendly colleague, that's OK. Find at least one thing you're grateful for and savor it.

Nurture your passion. If your job satisfaction has waned, but seeking a new job isn't a realistic option, you might consider your current job as a welcome paycheck that allows you to focus your energy on interests outside of work. Sometimes work is simply a means to enjoy those things you're truly passionate about.

More job satisfaction can mean less stress

Whether your work is a job, a career or a calling, you can take steps to restore its meaning. Make the best of difficult work situations by maintaining a positive attitude. Be creative as you think of ways to change your circumstances — or how you view your circumstances. Doing so can help you manage your stress and experience the rewards of your profession.

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Sitting at work is bad, but is standing...

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Arizona State University Obesity Solutions Initiative. "I don't want people to think that they should stand up like still soldiers. That is not a good idea."

Kerem Shuval, a senior research specialist at the American Cancer Society who uses a standing desk, agrees. "I find when I stand, I'm more likely to walk out of my office to talk to a colleague than call or e-mail."

Animal studies suggest that levels of a fat-burning enzyme called lipoprotein lipase rise not from standing but when muscles get activated by moving around. "That's why non-exercise activity is so important throughout the day," Shuval said. Keeping the body in a fat-burning metabolic mode also helps improve cholesterol, blood sugar, and high blood pressure.

For this reason, Levine decided to write his new book "Get Up: Why Your Chair is Killing You and What You Can Do About It" and two novels while strolling at 1.2 miles per hour on a treadmill desk he invented several years ago.

Levine's ability to do this without suffering an ankle sprain or pulled muscle, however, may not be typical. Many people may find it too difficult to write computer code or edit copy while walking on a moving conveyor belt.

"Sure, you'll burn more calories, but it will likely slow down your typing and increase the errors you'll make," Hedge said. "A treadmill desk is fine for making phone calls, reading, or dictating e-mails, but I don't recommend one for keyboard work."

Luke Leafgren, a Harvard resident dean and Arabic language instructor, occasionally uses a treadmill desk while composing e-mails, but not for his dissertation. "It took so much mental energy to write that I couldn't get distracted by the physical exertion."

Leafgren recently invented a portable computer stand, called StandStand, that fits flatly into his backpack and which he uses to prop his laptop on a library desk or dining hall table.

Higher priced sit/stand desks that can be easily adjusted or using a standing desk with a high-rise chair makes the most sense to provide comfort and prevent back and joint problems. Alison Elworthy, vice president of operations at HubSpot who is seven months pregnant, adjusts her desk height from sitting to standing a few times an hour throughout the day. "Staying in one position for a long period of time isn't comfortable," she said.

Hedge said changing positions regularly is a good idea for all office workers.

What's best for your muscle and joints and your mind's productivity? Sit for no more than 20 minutes at a time, Hedge recommended, and stand in one position for no more than 8 minutes. You should also take a two-minute moving break at least twice an hour to stretch or walk around.

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INNER HEALTH

11 Ways to Make Your Mind Calm and Peaceful

By Hannah Braime

Many of us live with a level of persistent low-grade stress that becomes so normalised that most of the time, we don't even realise it's there.

While we might not be displaying obvious signs of stress, cortisol—the hormone associated with stress—wreaks havoc on our mental and physical health over the long-term. Therefore it's important to make time to clear our minds and bring some peace into our lives, even if we're not feeling particularly anxious.

Here are 11 suggestions you can use to make your mind calm and peaceful.

Make time to meditate

Meditation has a number of positive effects on mind and body. It's also deceptively hard, which is why many people try it once or twice but struggle to make it a regular habit. Meditation helps combat the physical and emotional affects of stress and has lasting benefits that affect your productivity, as well as your ability to relax. Set aside time to meditate for just 10 minutes a day over the next week or two and experience the benefits for yourself.

Focus on gratitude

When we're facing a series of challenges, it can be easy to slip into tunnel vision and focus on what's going wrong at the expense of noticing what's going well. Even taking the time to write down just three things each day that we feel grateful for can help reinstate a balanced perspective on our day-to-day experience.

Notice internal judgements

While many of us fear judgement from others, the harshest criticisms we experience are often self-inflicted. Nothing clutters and stresses the mind like internal self-judgements, so pay attention to your thought patterns and notice when your inner critic rears up. Being aware of these thoughts as they occur is the first, and most important, step towards replacing criticism with calm.

Practice self-compassion

Once we are able to notice our self-criticisms and judgements in the moment, we have a chance to practice self-compassion. This means acknowledging and accepting reality, and extending the same kind of compassion to ourselves that we would to a good friend in our situation. In doing this, we stop measuring ourselves against different standards compared to other people.

Distance yourself from negative self-talk and beliefs

We can't necessarily stop ourselves experiencing negative self-talk and beliefs but we can distance ourselves from them. Using the phrase "I notice that...[I'm judging

"Everyone here has the sense that right now is one of those moments when we are influencing the future."

- Steve Jobs

myself harshly for forgetting that file this morning]" whenever we identify a negative self-judgement or belief helps us see these beliefs for what they really are: opinions, rather than facts.

Set routines

Setting routines might sound like a recipe for boredom but it actually helps instil a day-to-day sense of peace in our minds. When we have set routines, we have less decisions to make during the day. This frees up space in our minds for bigger, more important tasks.

Keep a journal

Journaling is a great way to get our thoughts out of our heads and onto paper. Writing down our most pressing thoughts and worries each day has a similar effect to talking to

someone about them. By making time to journal, you're giving yourself the chance to process your thoughts and feelings, and to express them in a safe, private space.

Create a to-do list

Similar to journaling, writing down your tasks and projects helps clear your mind. If you find that various activities and reminders keep popping into your head and distracting you from the task at hand, a system like Getting Things Done can help increase your productivity and your mental calm.

Exercise

It's a well-known fact that exercise augments our sense of mental well-being. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, exercising for just 10 minutes can release endorphins, pain-killing chemicals that help induce a state of mental and physical peace.

Experiment

Finally, it's important to remember that everyone is different. What helps one person find peace and calm might have the opposite effect on the next. As you go about your day, notice the times when you feel most at ease and make note of what you're doing at that time. Experiment with the methods above, as well as your own suggestions, and create your own list of activities that help your mind find clarity and relaxation.

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Play Well With Others: 7 Ways to Develop Effective Work Relationships

By Susan M. Heathfield

You can submarine your career and work relationships by the actions you take and the behaviors you exhibit at work. No matter your education, your experience, or your title, if you can't play well with others, you will never accomplish your work mission.

Effective interpersonal work relationships form the cornerstone of success and satisfaction with your job and your career. How important are effective work relationships?

They form the basis for promotional opportunities, pay increases, goal accomplishment, and job satisfaction.

The Gallup organization studied indicators of work satisfaction. They found that whether you have a best friend at work was one of the twelve key questions asked of employees that predicted job satisfaction. Without a friend at work, work satisfaction deteriorates.

What Happens When You Don't Play Well With Others?

A supervisor who worked in a several hundred person company quickly earned a reputation for not playing well with others. He collected data and used the data to find fault, place blame, and make other employees look bad. He enjoyed identifying problems but rarely suggested solutions.

He bugged his supervisor weekly for a bigger title and more money so that he could tell other employees what to do. When he announced that he was job hunting, not a single employee suggested that the company take action to convince him to stay.

He had burned his bridges all along the way. (And, no one will have a good word to say about him when an employer who is checking references comes their way.)

The Top 7 Ways to Play Well With Others at Work

These are the top seven ways you can play well with others at work. They form the basis for building effective interpersonal work relationships.

These are the actions you want to take to create a positive, empowering, motivational work environment for people.

Bring suggested solutions with the problems to the meeting table. Some employees spend an inordinate amount of time identifying problems. Honestly? That's the easy part. Thoughtful solutions are the challenge that will earn respect and admiration from

coworkers and bosses. Your willingness to defend your solution until a better or improved approach is decided on by the team is also a plus.

Don't ever play the blame game. You alienate coworkers, supervisors, and reporting staff. Yes, you may need to identify who was involved in a problem. You may even ask the Dr. W. Edwards Deming recommended question: what about the work system caused the employee to fail?

But, saying that it's not my fault and publicly identifying and blaming others for failures will earn you enemies. Throwing other employees under the bus, either privately or publicly, will also create enemies. These enemies will, in turn, help you to fail. You do need allies at work. Remember

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

- Malcom X

this if you want to accomplish your goals and dreams.

Your verbal and nonverbal communication matters. If you talk down to another employee, use sarcasm, or sound nasty, the other employee hears you. We are all radar machines that constantly scope out our environment. When you talk to another employee with a lack of respect, the message comes through loudly and clearly.

In one organization a high-level manager once asked this question, “I know you don't think I should scream at my employees. But, sometimes, they make me so mad. When is it ever appropriate for me to scream at the employees?” The answer? Never, of course, if respect for people is a hallmark of your organization—which it should be.

Never blind side a coworker, boss, or reporting staff person. If the first time a coworker hears about a problem is in a staff meeting or from an email sent to his supervisor, you have blindsided the coworker. Always discuss problems, first, with the people directly involved who own the work system.

Also called lynching or ambushing your coworkers, you will never build effective work alliances unless

your coworkers trust you. And, without alliances, you will never accomplish the most important goals for your job and career. You cannot do it alone so treat your coworkers as you expect them to treat you.

Keep your commitments. In an organization, work is interconnected. If you fail to meet deadlines and commitments, you affect the work of other employees. Always keep commitments, and if you can't, make sure all affected employees know what happened. Provide a new due date and make every possible effort to honor the new deadline.

It is not okay in an organization to just quietly allow deadlines to slip by. Your coworkers, even if they fail to confront you, will think less of you and disrespect your actions. And, no, don't think even for a second that they didn't notice that the deadline passed. You insult them if you even consider this possibility.

Share credit for accomplishments, ideas, and contributions. How often do you accomplish a goal or complete a project with no help from others? If you are a manager, how many of the great ideas you promote were contributed by staff members?

Take the time, and expend the energy, to thank, reward, recognize and specify contributions of the people who help you succeed. This is a no-fail approach to building effective work relationships. Share credit; deflect blame and failure.

Help other employees find their greatness. Every employee in your organization has talents, skills, and experience. If you can help fellow employees harness their best abilities, you benefit the organization immeasurably. The growth of individual employees benefits the whole.

Compliment, recognize, praise, and notice their contributions. You don't have to be a manager to help create a positive, motivating environment for employees. In this environment, employees do find and contribute their greatness. They will always remember that you were part of bringing it out of them. Those interpersonal work relationships are cherished.

If you regularly carry out these seven actions, you will play well with others and build effective interpersonal work relationships. Coworkers will value you as a colleague. Bosses will believe that you play on the right team—with them.

You'll accomplish your work goals, and you may even experience fun, recognition, and personal motivation. And, hey, work can't get any better than that.

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