



Finnish Institute of  
Occupational Health

# Exercise - Sedentary work

OFF WE GO! HEALTH AT WORKPLACES - LIST OF TIPS

## Sit less, move more!

When you're fit, sedentary work poses no problems. Good physical fitness helps you recover and protects you from the strain of work that is mainly light and sedentary. It is worth adding some exercise to your working day when you do sedentary work, and to get up often.

**TIPS FOR WORKPLACES:** Which of the following are already in use at your workplace? What next?

- Exercise, sitting less and healthy lifestyle habits are addressed in induction training and performance appraisals.
- We have washing facilities and changing rooms at our workplace, which make active commuting easier, for example.
- Our workplace culture is exercise-oriented. We don't send colleagues who sit near us an email, we get up and speak to them.
- At our workplace, the printers and photocopiers are a short walking distance away.
- Nobody wonders if you get up and move about or stretch sometimes or stand in meetings.
- Weekly walking meetings are part of our routine work.
- We exercise together. This also motivates 'couch potatoes'.
- Our workplace has exercise options for different needs, for example, exercise groups for weight-loss, for those who have lost their motivation to exercise, or special physical activities for those with neck problems.
- At our workplace we simultaneously carry out exercise and improve ergonomics by, for example, strengthening the neck and shoulder muscles and improving work postures.
- At our workplace we break long spells of sitting by having exercise breaks or walks, for example.
- We actively take advantage of furniture that reduces sitting and allows us to change work postures.
- We remind each other to get up and not to sit for long periods. Reminders and instructions are motivating. Exercises for the neck and back (in Finnish): [selkakanava.fi/jumppaohjeita-selalle-ja-niskalle](https://selkakanava.fi/jumppaohjeita-selalle-ja-niskalle).
- In addition to exercise, we also take care of good ergonomics and change our work postures to avoid developing aches and pains. Occupational health services can help check your ergonomics.
- We have one refreshing food break during the work shift. We go for lunch to a place at a comfortable walking distance.
- We take our coffee breaks around a tall table, standing.
- In our break room we have exercise equipment at our disposal, such as wooden poles, elastic bands or kettlebells to use during exercise breaks.
- Our workplace takes part in exercise promotion theme days, open classes and campaigns such as the 'Exercise day of your dreams' event: <https://www.unelmienliikuntapaiva.fi/en/>. We choose and plan events together.
- We use free, motivating materials that motivate us to reduce sitting time, such as the Work Life Health Party materials (available in Finnish): [www.yksielama.fi/tule-terveystalkoisiin](https://www.yksielama.fi/tule-terveystalkoisiin)
- Our employer sponsors employees' leisure-time exercise.
- My workmates or colleagues and I also exercise together in our leisure time.

## How fit do you have to be to feel and manage at your best?

**You can improve your aerobic physical fitness, muscle strength and movement control!** Working-aged people need 2.5 hours of light aerobic exercise such as walking, berry-picking, gardening, or housework, OR 1 hour and 15 minutes of more strenuous exercise such as running, skiing or water sports per week. In addition, they should do muscle strengthening exercise twice a week, such as weight training and movement control such as ball games.

You can find healthy exercise guidelines for the working aged at [http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi/en/products-services/physical\\_activity\\_pie](http://www.ukkinstituutti.fi/en/products-services/physical_activity_pie)

*Occupational health services can help you exercise more and sit less! You can get more information on what physical activity is suitable for you and advice on exercise from occupational health services, fitness advisors, or instructions at sports.*

*Exercise and reducing sitting time invigorate you and are also good for the mind. Healthy lifestyle habits support each other. You may have noticed the importance of exercise for a good night's sleep.*

### EXERCISE HELPS YOU RECOVER FROM AND COPE AT WORK.

What do you already do? What next?

- Exercise is part of everyday life. I walk when doing errands, I use the stairs instead of the lift, I park my car further away, and I get off the bus a few stops earlier.
- I do restorative exercise such as leisurely walking, yoga or stretching.
- I think about what kind of exercise would help me recover from work.
- I exercise in natural environments. Exercising in natural environments has many positive effects on health. It is also a good way of relaxing and recovering.
- Doing different kinds of exercise keeps me motivated. I sometimes try out new forms of exercise!
- I monitor my own exercise and reduction of sitting time. Self-monitoring using, for example, a pedometer, activity wristband or diary makes it easier to see my fitness level and to set goals. I avoid sitting for long spells in my leisure time.
- I have marked time for exercise in my diary.
- I have set a goal for exercise and sitting. I have thought about the benefits of exercising more and sitting less. This makes obstacles such as poor weather seem much smaller.
- My family members, friends and colleagues encourage me to exercise more and sit less.