

Deskercise! 20 Ways to Get Moving While you Work

The term *deskercise* refers to exercise that can be performed throughout your workday and even from your desk. There are a variety of movements available, but in this article we will focus on 20 *inclusive* ways to effectively add more movement into your day.

Health Risks of a Sedentary Lifestyle

Perhaps you hit the gym before or after work for 30 minutes five times a week and you're wondering, "Why do I need to move more during my workday?" If this is you, kudos for meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines (PAG) recommended amount of physical activity per week – 150 minutes. However, there's a catch. Research now says that meeting the PAG may not be enough to undo the health risks of a sedentary lifestyle. Sitting for long periods of time during the day is just as detrimental to your health. Prolonged sitting can impair the body's ability to deposit fat, interrupt the functioning of HDL (the healthy cholesterol), and increase one's risk for cardiovascular disease and other causes of mortality. See [ACSM's information](#) on reducing sedentary behaviors.

The Solution

Adding short bouts of cardiovascular, strength, and stretching exercises throughout the workday will help reduce sedentary behavior and improve fitness levels.

Some quick tips for adding in activity to your workday:

- Taking a quick walk or push break around the office every time you need a refill on coffee or water
- Instead of emailing your coworker a few offices down, get up and go converse in person
- Pace while on long conference calls
- Have a walking/pushing meeting
- Take the long route to the restroom
- Swap your office chair for a stability ball



The Challenge

Pick a two-week block (10 workdays) and challenge yourself to complete 2x2 of the exercises each day. This means you will pick two exercises and perform them twice each throughout your day. Brain bogged down? Set a reminder on your Outlook calendar to do your *deskercises*. As you begin to feel less stressed and more productive, add in as many exercises during your day as you can. Your co-workers might be wondering why you are doing chair-dips every two hours; you can share this article and challenge with them.

Deskercise Video

Deskercise!

20 WAYS TO GET MOVING WHILE YOU WORK

CARDIOVASCULAR



STRENGTH



1. Jog in Place: This exercise can be done seated or standing. Continue the movement for one minute. If standing, increase intensity by picking up your knees.



2. Ski Arms: Hold arms up and out fully extended with one arm forward and the other back. Swap arms back and forth moving continuously for one minute.



3. Seated Dancing: There is no shame in a quick bout of seated dancing. Maybe you have a closed door or cubicle barrier. Regardless, let loose for one minute and get your heart pumping.



4. Punch it Out: From a seated or standing position, take some jabs into the air continuously for one minute. To ramp up the intensity, grab some full water bottles for added weight or perform in a squat position if standing.



5. Arm Circles: Sit tall on the edge of your chair with arms fully extended to the side. Make small circles and work your way up to larger circles. Continue for one minute.



6. Squeeze: Perform an isometric hold on either your glutes or abdominals for 10 seconds and release. Repeat squeeze five times.



7. Wall Sit: Find a wall, squat down with your thighs parallel to the floor, make a 90-degree angle with your legs, and hold for a minute. You can also split the challenge into two, 30-second sits.



8. Chair Squat: Sit on the edge of your chair with feet about shoulder-width apart. Stand up without using your hands and then squat down to return to your chair. When squatting, stick your backside out and always make sure your knees do not cross over your toes. Complete 8-10 reps.



9. Desk Dip: Use a sturdy desk or a non-rolling chair. Sit at the very edge if using a chair and place your hands on both sides of the body. Plant both feet on the floor and take one to two steps away from the desk or chair. Bend your elbows down to a 90-degree angle, hold, and re-straighten. Complete 8-10 reps.



10. Hand Shake: Clasp hands in front of chest as if you were giving yourself a handshake. One thumb should be up and the other down. Pull as hard as you can and hold the movement for 20 seconds repeating twice.



11. Prayer Hands: Seated upright with feet flat on floor, bring palms together in front of your chest; push both hands together powerfully until you feel your arm and chest muscles contract. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat twice.



12. Wall Push-Up: Start standing or seated in a chair about two feet from a wall. Lean forward until palms are against the wall and then bend your elbows to push yourself toward the wall. Hold push-up for a few seconds and then push back to the starting position. Complete 10 reps.



13. Chest Fly: Grab two objects and hold in each hand. Begin with arms fully extended in front of your body. With objects in hand, keep the extension, move your arms out to the side and pull them back to starting position.



14. Shoulder Roll Back: Roll your shoulders back and squeeze shoulder blades together, holding for 10 seconds. Repeat the movement five times.

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FLEXIBILITY



15. Raise the Roof: Grab two books and hold them with your palms up. Raise your hands up towards the roof and lower back down with your elbows even with shoulders. Complete 8-10 reps.



18. Forearm Stretch: Hold one arm fully extended out in front of you with your fingers facing up. Use your other hand to pull your fingers back towards your body and hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat with your other arm. Now perform the same movement but with your fingers facing down on each arm.



16. Seated Crunches: Grab an object with a little weight (textbook, purse, etc.) and hold it up against your forehead. Sitting up tall in your chair or wheelchair crunch forward pulling in your abdominals and release back up. Complete 10-12 crunches.



17. Overhead Triceps Extension: Grab one or two books depending on how much weight you want and hold it with both hands, arms fully extended above your head. Bend your elbows back and release up to the starting position. Complete 10-12 reps.



19. Shoulder Stretch: Cross one arm over your body and loop the other arm at the elbow of the extended arm and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat the same movement with your other arm.



20. Chest Opener: Start with prayer hands. Open your hands out pressing your elbows down to open the chest. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat twice.

Click the link to download the [Deskercises Poster](#) for use in your workplace.

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