

## Reducing Time Spent Sitting

- **Aim to minimize sitting as much as possible. If you sit at work, you need to put much more effort into NOT sitting during leisure time.**
- A good strategy is to sit on a posture cushion or unstable platform that allows your pelvis and hips to move slightly and forces you to engage your core muscles. You may also find sitting on an exercise ball to be helpful. This is a great option if you choose to watch television, as you can incorporate some exercises into the commercial breaks.
- If you work at a computer, it is a worthwhile investment to purchase a desk that can elevate so that you can alternate between sitting and standing. An even better solution is to make your own treadmill workstation. See page 187 of Dr. Chestnut's book; *The Wellness & Prevention Paradigm* for a photographic example.<sup>1</sup>
- Sedentary behavior (from the Latin *sedere*—"to sit") is the term used to describe behaviors for which energy expenditure is low; such as prolonged sitting time travelling to and from work, at work, and at home.<sup>2</sup> Think about how many times you have met someone "for a coffee" and simply sat. Why not go for a walk instead?
- Even if you get 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week, you still might be at risk of adverse metabolic and health effects from prolonged sitting.<sup>3</sup>
- Adults, on average, spend more than half their waking hours sitting. People in industrial society now sit for an average of 32 years of their life!<sup>4</sup>
- Three-quarters of all workers in industrialized countries have jobs that require sitting for long periods.<sup>5</sup>
- Prolonged sitting in a static posture has a negative effect on the health of the spine and thus increases the chance of chronic pain. Sitting also causes poor posture which is a causal factor in early death and illness susceptibility.<sup>6,7</sup>

1. Chestnut JL. *The Wellness & Prevention Paradigm*. TWP Press, Victoria, BC. 2011.

2. Owen N, Bauman A, and Brown W. Too much sitting: a novel and important predictor of chronic disease risk? *Br J Sports Med*. Feb 2009, Vol. 43, 81-83.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Reinecke SM, Hazard RG, Coleman K, Pope MH (2002) A continuous passive lumbar motion device to relieve back pain in prolonged sitting. In: Kumar S (ed) *Advances in industrial ergonomics and safety IV*. Taylor and Francis, London, pp 971-976.

6. Marras WS, Lavender SA, Leurgans SE et al (1995) Biomechanical risk factors for occupationally related low back disorders. *Ergonomics* 38(2):377-410.

7. Kado, DM et al (2004) Hyperkyphotic posture predicts mortality in older community-dwelling men and women: a prospective study. *J of Amer Geriatrics Society*. Vol 52(10):1662-1667.