

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING BREAKS

The fact is, many of us will *wait* until we start experiencing musculoskeletal pain before we take charge of breaks.



Why Are We Not Taking Breaks?

Research from Dr. Gilson in the Health Promotion Journal of Australia found that the #1 challenge employees identified was **compromising employee productivity**.

Employees commented on the synonymous nature between **sitting** and a **high work ethic** and that they are firmly fixed in office culture (Gilson et al., 2011).

Have We Been Taking Breaks “Wrong” All This Time?

If our mindset is, “work more, get more done,” how do breaks come into the picture?

Although taking breaks may seem counterintuitive, it is absolutely crucial to help you get through your day! If you think of your mental capacity like a car engine, **long uninterrupted hours of work will deplete the brain’s primary source of energy** (glucose). Try changing your mindset to, “take a break to work harder.”

Additionally, scientific research is finding that **prolonged, uninterrupted sitting is associated with increased risk of health problems** including mortality, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers (Owen et al., 2010). Taking active breaks away from your seat can be even more beneficial for your body.



Q: How do I take an effective break?

A: Take a break BEFORE you start feeling uncomfortable even if you want to keep working! If you are in the zone, finish what you’re doing, but reward yourself with a break afterward.

Q: How long should the break be?

A: The *quality* of your break is more important than the length of it. Just a few minutes can be enough if your attention is diverted from work.

Q: When should I take a break?

A: It is important to take a break DURING the day, not just at the beginning or at the end.

Sources: Gilson, N. D., Burton, N. W., van Uffelen, J. G., & Brown, W. J. (2011). Occupational sitting time: Employees' perceptions of health risks and intervention strategies. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia : Official Journal of Australian Association of Health Promotion Professionals*, 22(1), 38-43.

Owen, N., Healy, G. N., Matthews, C. E., & Dunstan, D. W. (2010). Too much sitting: The population health science of sedentary behavior. *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews*, 38(3), 105-113.

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