

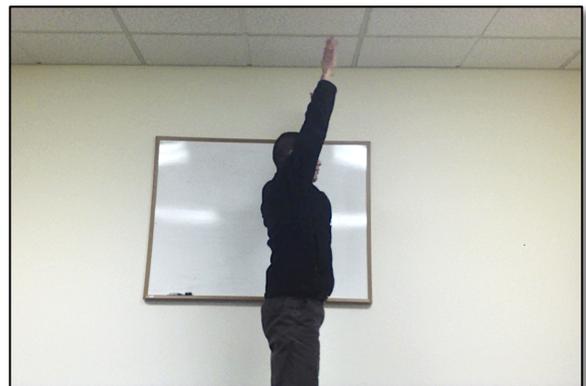
Engage Your Muscles To Improve Your Health!

By: David Peckinpugh, Health Coach

For many of us, our daily work environment involves long periods of time in a seated position. This may mean spending hours sitting in front of a computer, sitting in meetings, seated behind a steering wheel, or in some other sedentary position. Recent research has suggested that prolonged and chronic sitting can have a negative impact on your overall health and may contribute to a variety of chronic diseases.^{1,2} Fortunately, there is also evidence that taking short activity breaks throughout the day can counteract some of the negative effects of prolonged sitting.³ The following 2-minute routine is designed to engage your muscles and help increase your metabolic activity which can have a positive impact on your health. For best results, try to complete this short routine multiple times throughout the day.

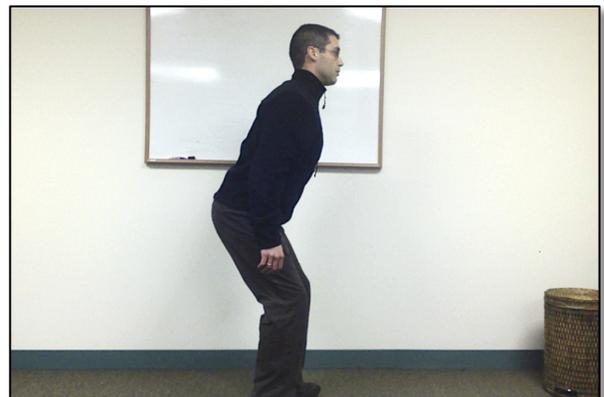
STEP 1:

- Keeping your weight back over your heels and your back straight, squat down to a comfortable depth with your arms at your side
- Slowly raise yourself back to a standing position while lifting your arms straight up and standing on your toes (if possible).
- Repeat this sequence 5-10 times



STEP 2:

- To engage the muscles of your lower back and legs, bend your knees slightly while leaning forward slightly bending at your hips
- Let your arms fall naturally to your side
- Keep your weight back over your heels – not your toes
- Hold this position and count slowly to 15



STEP 3:

- To engage the muscles of your upper back, straighten your arms while reaching back and squeezing your shoulder blades together
- Hold this position and count slowly to 15



STEP 4:

- While keeping your lower body and lower back in place, slowly rotate your arms forward and reach up and forward
- Hold this position and count slowly to 15



STEP 5:

- If desired, repeat the entire routine again for a total of two rounds

David Peckinpaugh is a Health Coach with Dartmouth College Health Coaching. He has earned a Master's Degree in Exercise Science and is a certified Health Fitness Specialist through the ACSM as well as a Certified Strength Conditioning Specialist through the NSCA. He has a rich history of developing successful health behavior modification programs that focus on intrinsic motivation and sustainable results. He can be reached at 603-259-4422 or by email at d.peckinpaugh@dartmouthhealthcoaching.com

References:

- 1) Van der Ploeg HP, Chey T, Korda RJ, Banks E, Bauman A. (2011). Sitting time and all-cause mortality risk in 222,497 Australian adults. *Arch Intern Med.* 2012;172(6):494-500. doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2011.2174.
- 2) Katzmarzyk PT, Church TS, Craig CL, & Bouchard C. (2009). Sitting time and mortality from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. *MSSE*, 41(5), 998-1005.
- 3) G. N. Healy, C. E. Matthews, D. W. Dunstan, E. A. H. Winkler, N. Owen. Sedentary time and cardio-metabolic biomarkers in US adults: NHANES 2003-06. *European Heart Journal*, 2011

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Disclaimer: This article includes advice on exercise and physical activity. Remember, you are often the best judge of what activities are appropriate for you. Please consult your medical provider if you are unsure if a physical activity is right for you. If you choose to participate in the activity discussed here, you assume the risks of performing the activity.