

# 5 ways to add movement when working from home

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It's 2021 and never before have so many people in society been asked (or forced) to continue to work from home. From a physiological perspective this is a social experiment on the grandest scale, writes Andrew May.

Researchers and academics are going to have years of studies and experiments about the lessons, both good and bad from the changes COVID-19 made to our lives

Many reported in their first few weeks that they are taking between 50 to 60 per cent less steps per day.

It's important as a baseline to aim for 10,000 steps to keep your body moving, the mitochondria active and awake and keep your brain oxygenated and primed for productivity and adapting to this radical change. Research shows that being sedentary most of the time even with adding in our short bouts of gym exercise to align with physical guidelines can still significantly increase your health risks (Van der 2012).

What this means is we as a population need to avoid being sedentary as much as possible.

A number of reasons why WFH results in less daily steps and movement include:

- Sleeping in later, because you can.
- Watching more TV in the morning and throughout the day.
- You don't have the same operating rhythm and have thrown out a lot of the previous rituals like walking meetings and general movement throughout a larger office.
- Procrastination because you feel like you have all day to complete work and without seeing other people all day, there seems to be less urgency.

The following five tips are designed to get you moving again and to keep your bodies and brains oxygenated, lubricated and performing properly whilst you make the transition to working from home throughout this global pandemic.

## 1. Replace commute times with a walk

For most of us the commute to work is in a sedentary state time in the bus, train or car being approximately 90 minutes of your day every day.

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Turn this into productive time for your body and brain and head out for a brisk walk at the exact same time of day. For example, if you have a 7.30am bus that gets you to the office by 8.15am, introduce a 45-minute walk.

## 2. Schedule walking phone meetings.

At StriveStronger we are always encouraging our clients to schedule moving meetings because of the known physical health benefits, increased energy and stronger personal connections they provide. Try to adapt this strategy and schedule in walking phone meetings with colleagues.

Tips for making it work:

- Check the weather forecast, and plan accordingly.
- Be sure the meeting will not require technical data.
- The best time for a walking meeting (but not limited to) is right before lunch to address the mid-morning slump, or late afternoon to inject a burst of energy.
- Take a water bottle – Proper hydration before, during and after.
- Be mindful of wearing appropriate walking shoes.
- Be strategic with the walking route. Avoid shops and other busy places.

## 3. Regular doses of nature.

Walking to the park, beach or any form of nature will give you a good dose of fresh air, oxygen, vitamin D and a moment to psychologically detach. Tips for doing this in times of social distancing include:

- Find a quiet patch of grass or oval and walk around barefoot.
- Do a short circuit on the grass in the garden. A great one to try is seven-minute metabolic circuit which you can find in the MatchFit library.
- Try new spots around the home to do five to 10-minute deep breathing. Under a tree, front or back garden, practice mindful walking and notice things you haven't noticed before.

## 4. Sit to stand throughout the day

Sitting has been labelled the new smoking. We recommend consciously shifting from a sitting workstation to standing workstation then to a dynamic workstation (**moving** whilst working) periodically during the day.

Paul Batman suggests 30-50 shifts in position per day is necessary to negate the negative effects of prolonged sitting. Research shows performance does not reduce using standing and dynamic workstations only if you are doing computer task that requires fine motor actions of the hands (mouse pointing and clicking), you should temporarily remain sitting.

## 5. Phone circuit

Clients are reporting a lot more phone calls WFH as you simply can't turn your head to talk to the person next to you in the office. A phone call is an opportunity to stand up and get some movement in. Try something other than just pacing.

Slow-paced strength exercises will not have you puffing on the end of the phone but simply fire up the mitochondria to help you reoxygenate. A simple phone call circuit may look like this:

- 60-second wall sit
- 20 lunges
- 30 squats
- 20 wall push-ups (one-handed or two, if you have a headset)
- 30 bicep curls with hand weights (if you have them or replace with food cans or water bottles)
- Crab walks with loop band

One final tip. Schedule a number of these activities in your diary and as soon as you can install a healthier and more active operating rhythm by following a WFH better week. Putting a number of these activities in your diary makes you accountable.

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