



# **Ergotron JustStand® Index:** Getting Productivity Up & Moving

ERGOTRON®



## OVERVIEW



**The office landscape is evolving.** The new generation and innovations in technology are impacting when, where and how employees work and collaborate.

“*Today’s technology has the power to engage our minds more than ever before, but that shouldn’t be at the expense of our bodies. If we want to optimize performance and productivity, we must reestablish the mind-body connection. Reducing sedentary behavior and increasing low-level physical activity both at work and during leisure time is the solution.*” - Carrie Schmitz, AOEAS, Certified Health Coach, Senior Manager, Human Factors and Ergonomics Research, Ergotron

The long-term health problems associated with **sedentary** work and lifestyles, often referred to as “**sitting disease**,” may be one of the most unanticipated health threats of our modern time. Physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality<sup>1</sup> and accounts for one in 10 deaths in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

While well-documented by major research and health organizations around the globe, the collective mind share remains focused on getting recommended amounts of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Little attention is given to the impact of being sedentary, and most employees still have no choice but to sit at their desks all day.

To further explore this issue, Ergotron partnered with ResearchNow to ask 1,000 full-time employees, ages 18 to 65+, about their attitudes towards sitting at work and how they believe it impacts their productivity and overall well-being. This report, the second Ergotron JustStand® Index,<sup>3</sup> outlines the fundamental and adverse effects our sedentary lifestyles are having on our work and our lives and the promising news that public awareness is shifting.

### **Sedentary | adjective**

Sitting or lying down, (with the exception of sleeping), are what we call ‘sedentary’ behaviors. You can be sedentary at work, at school, at home, when travelling or during leisure time. Sedentary behavior requires little energy expenditure.

### **Sitting Disease | noun**

A term coined by the scientific community, commonly used when referring to metabolic syndrome and the ill-effects of an overly sedentary lifestyle.

# 5 BIG TAKEAWAYS

1.

**Restlessness is more disruptive than social media.**

When feeling restless, 61% are more apt to get up and move around than to check social media (16%).

2.

**Employees aren't happy about sitting.** 68% say they must sit all day for their job and 61% dislike or even hate sitting all day.

3.

**Wearables create a false sense of fitness.** 55% of people believe wearables and mobile apps are the best equipment to improve health, but these devices don't differentiate between sitting and standing.

4.

**Employee health and wellness should be a priority,** however only 23% are aware of a wellness program at their company.

5.

**Awareness of sitting disease has doubled since 2013,** but is still low considering the major health implications of a sedentary lifestyle.

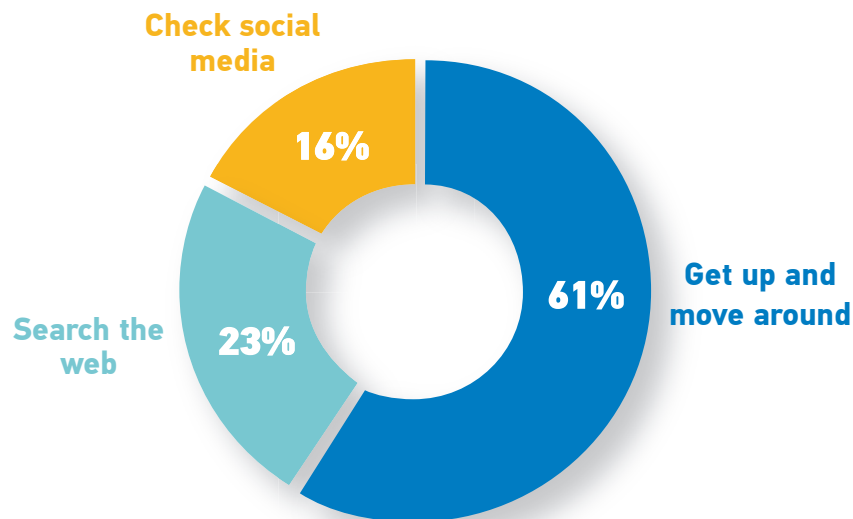
# 1 PRODUCTIVITY TAKES A SEAT

While the impact of prolonged sitting on the human body has been well-documented in recent years, employers have been slow to connect the dots between extended sitting and the physical health of employees—or its corresponding effect on the overall health of an organization.

According to the Index results, restlessness from sitting too long is more disruptive to employees' ability to focus at work than browsing social media and the web.

Personal use of companies' internet access while at work is a common workplace problem, coined "cyberloafing." In addition to hurting productivity, there can be significant financial repercussions. Recent research estimates that cyberloafing could cost U.S. business as much as \$85 billion a year.<sup>4</sup>

## WHEN YOU'RE FEELING RESTLESS AT YOUR DESK AT WORK, WHAT ARE YOU MOST APT TO DO?



## CHAPTER 1 — PRODUCTIVITY TAKES A SEAT

If employees are spending more time moving around (61 percent) because they are restless from sitting too long versus “cyberloafing” (a combined 39 percent)—imagine how much more time, productivity and money is being lost in the process.

Additionally, research suggests that when interrupted it can take a worker more than 20 minutes to get back on task.<sup>5</sup>

A majority (58 percent) of employees admit to taking two to five breaks a day and another 25 percent are taking more than six breaks per day to relieve the discomfort, restlessness and fatigue caused by prolonged sitting.

As organizations look for ways to improve employee productivity and minimize distractions, it’s apparent that examining time spent at the computer, and potentially workstation composition may offer not only a wellness benefit but also an overall financial benefit to the company.



### 5 COMMON EXCUSES FOR A BREAK



Bathroom break  
(89%)



Get a drink  
(77%)



Talk to a coworker  
or ask a question  
(61%)



Get food  
(54%)



Go for a walk  
(39%)






## TAKING A STAND FOR OFFICE CULTURE

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Office culture is fast becoming a bigger differentiator for recruitment and retention than other, more traditional employee benefits.

Some companies have become extremely creative in trying to increase employee happiness and satisfaction – whether it's free snacks, a nap room or free gym memberships. Unfortunately, even some of the most trendy and forward-thinking companies are largely missing the mark when it comes to corporate office settings.

Mobility and collaboration are perks in today’s corporate world. Younger employees fear the sentence of “cube life” and many organizations are adopting shared, unassigned workspaces. Our research underscores this desire for a non-traditional workspace.

-  **68% must sit all day for their job**
-  **61% dislike or even hate sitting all day**
-  **84% would prefer to be able to sit and stand at will**

What’s more, the American Medical Association recommends that organizations offer sitting alternatives, including sit-stand workstations or isometric balls.<sup>6</sup>

The ability to get up and move around while still remaining productive can be a win-win scenario for both employees and employers. Using sit-stand workstations to encourage movement can improve culture and health, helping companies retain and attract top talent – all while enhancing productivity.

**HOW MUCH TIME DO WE SPEND SITTING ALL DAY? **

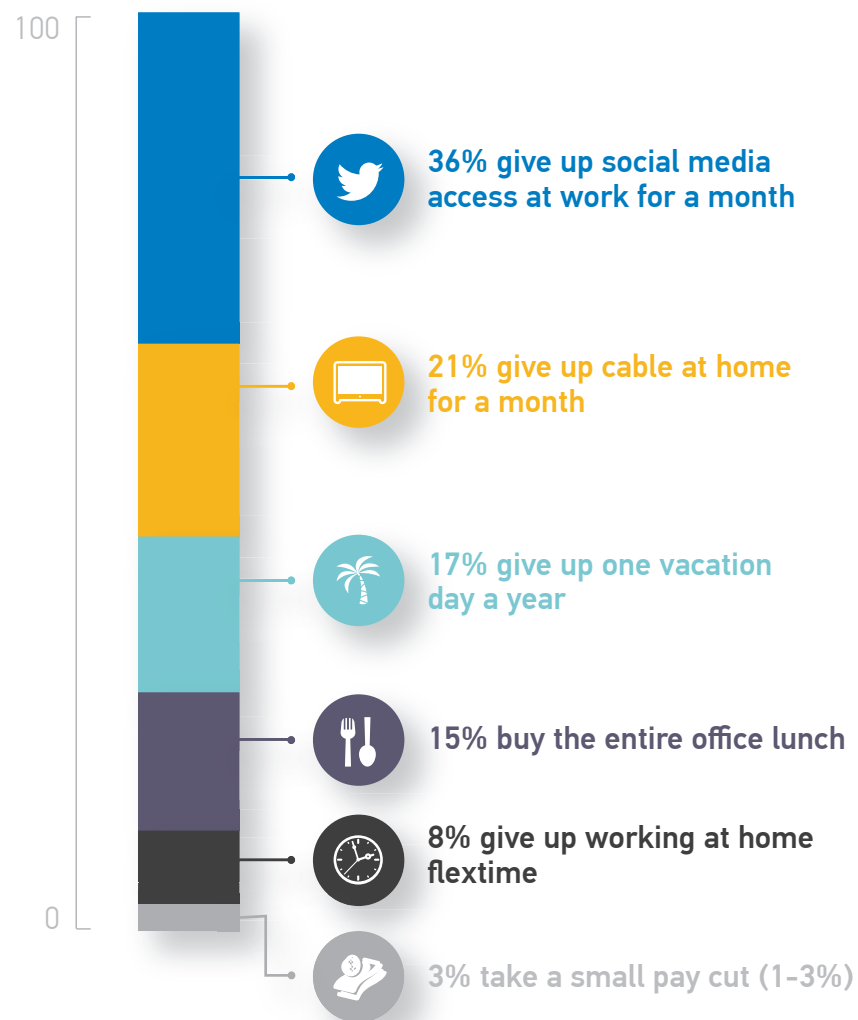


**12.3 hours total**



**5.8 hours at work**

**EMPLOYEES HATE SITTING SO MUCH, THEY WOULD RATHER: **

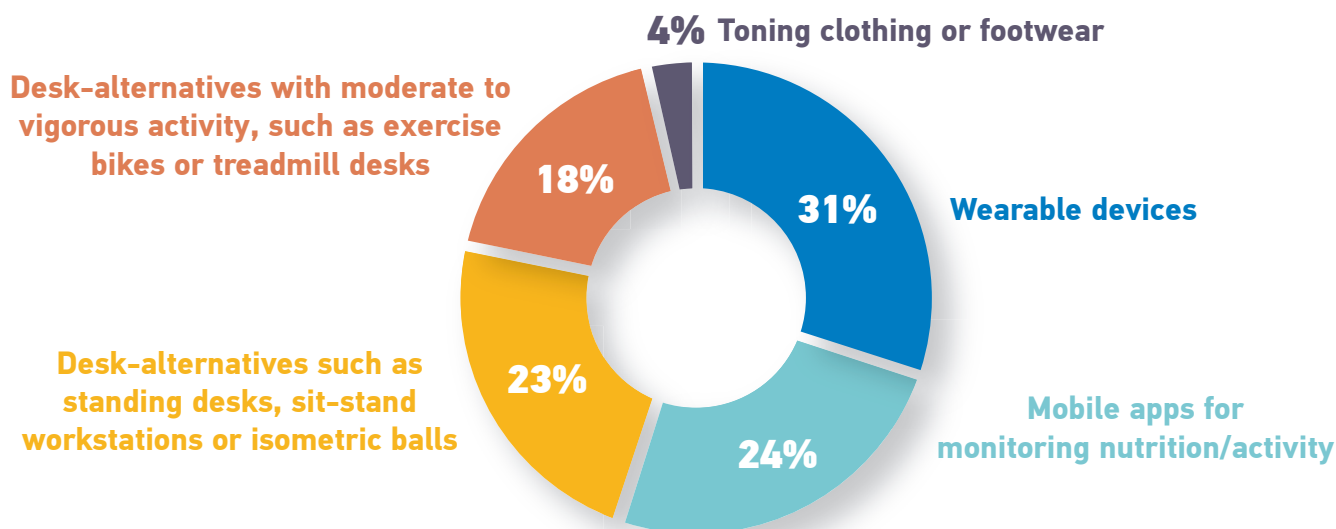


# 3 A FALSE SENSE OF FITNESS



With the influx of wearable devices, fitness clothing and equipment giving consumers even better insight into their physical life, the Index queried employees to understand the place these devices have in their sense of being fit and healthy.

## WHICH DEVICES OFFER THE GREATEST HEALTH BENEFITS?





While the market is flooded with consumer health devices designed to measure fitness levels, sleep patterns and nutritional habits, there are very few devices that measure total sitting time or counter-measure the positive impacts of standing. By tracking only steps and heart rate, these devices may be lulling users into a false sense of fitness and health, especially if the majority of steps are accumulated during short bouts of exercise. Breaking up sedentary time throughout the day with an activity like standing can have a bigger impact on calorie burn than exercise, yet our devices aren't tracking it.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

"Low intensity, 'non-exercise' activities like standing and walking are much more important than we realized. In fact, low level activities play a crucial metabolic role and accounts for more of our daily energy expenditure than exercise – moderate-to-high intensity activity like running." – Carrie Schmitz

The 62 percent of employees who indicated that they get the recommended 2.5 hours a week of exercise will probably be disheartened to learn that studies have found that even the suggested level of activity does not counteract the harmful effects of prolonged sitting.<sup>7</sup>

“*The nature of the human body was to be active and moving all day. The body was never designed to be crammed into a chair where all of these cellular mechanisms get switched off. Obviously we're supposed to rest from time to time. But that rest is supposed to break up the activity. It's not supposed to be the way of life. This very unnatural [sitting] posture is not only bad for your back, your wrists, your arms, and your metabolism, but it actually switches off the fundamental fueling systems that integrate what's going on in the bloodstream with what goes on in the muscles and in the tissues.*”

– James Levine, MD, PhD

Our data suggests that while today's employee may be more focused on their personal health and well-being than ever before, they are missing the most fundamental of points in terms of the importance of regular movement and avoiding prolonged sedentary behavior.

**LIFE HACK: STANDING BURNS CALORIES**

If you stand for three additional hours each day over the course of a year, you can burn up to 30,000 extra calories and eight pounds of fat. That's the equivalent of running about ten marathons.<sup>8</sup>



# THE BENEFITS OF RETHINKING WELLNESS

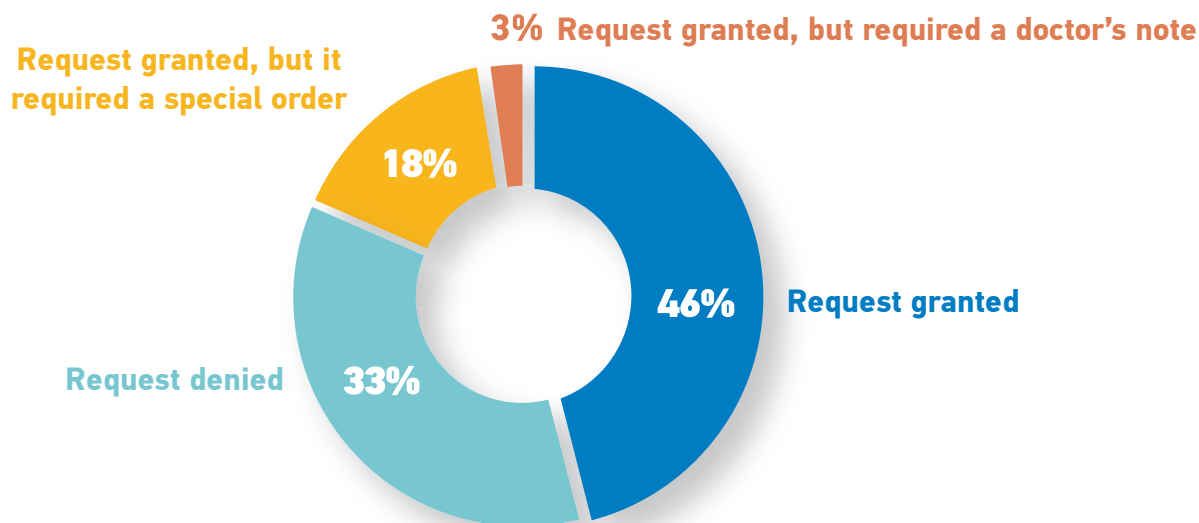
# 4

Health and wellness in corporations is a priority. Organizations of all sizes are investing in these initiatives through expanded employee benefits, risk and lifestyle management programs, but there is still room for growth.

Data shows that only 23 percent of employees are aware of a wellness program at their company. Of those, only 35 percent include a sit-stand workstation as a benefit option.

While 62 percent of employees are aware of sit-stand desks, only 16 percent have asked their employer for one. A third of those requests were denied.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EMPLOYEES REQUEST A SIT-STAND WORKSTATION?



The ability to move between sitting and standing throughout the day has promising health implications, like the reduction of musculoskeletal disorders<sup>9</sup> such as low back pain<sup>10</sup> and an increase in mood states and productivity.<sup>11</sup> The long-term implications of more low-level physical activity may actually decrease the risk of metabolic syndrome and diseases like Type II Diabetes, cancer, heart attack and stroke.

As the wellness movement continues to evolve, improving employee health by combating sedentary workstyles is expected to become a more common workplace benefit.

# 5 MOVING FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION



In 2013 and 2016, the JustStand Index asked three key questions, in an effort to measure changes over time.

Since the first JustStand Index was released in 2013, there has been increased understanding of the risks associated with sedentary lifestyles. Overall awareness of what is known as sitting disease has more than doubled, from 7 percent in 2013 to 15 percent in 2016. In addition, more people believe that prolonged sitting could lead to an early death (from 74 percent to 86 percent). Perhaps most telling however is the data point that had no significant statistical change – when respondents were asked if they personally believe they are at risk for sitting disease, less than half of respondents said yes (47 percent), compared to 48 percent in 2013.

JUSTSTAND INDEX: CHANGES OVER TIME 



**This data is unsettling.** While there is a general awareness of sitting disease and its risks, the level of comprehensive understanding is limited. More people know that sitting all day is bad, but they are still in the dark when it comes to the metabolic effects of a sedentary lifestyle. This basic perception makes sitting disease and its ultimate impact seem like a problem for the distant future, when the reality is that it's something that needs to be addressed now. Increasing education and awareness initiatives will bring these consequences to light, and will encourage change among employees and employers.

While increased awareness is one piece of the solution, the other is taking action. As research continues to prove that sedentary behavior is a threat to our overall health, it's critical to begin taking steps to increase activity throughout the day, beyond the general advice of exercising more. This is an issue that must be considered each and every day as we strive to move more.

So, what will it take? How can we achieve widespread awareness? What will it take for employees to take responsibility of their health and be more thoughtful of their daily activity levels? How can employers empower their employees to be more active at work and increase their overall wellness? We want to continue this conversation and one day see that the norm is an active workplace where we are encouraged to move. Here's what the experts have to say about what needs to happen:

“*Sedentary behavior is driving up healthcare costs and affecting performance and productivity. One almost shockingly simple solution is to get people moving. There's so much that an executive or HR professional can't control when it comes to what impacts employee wellness and productivity – like what people are eating or how much they're sleeping – so it's important that they take advantage of their influence in the office and workstation environment. Whether it's standing meetings, walking paths or sit-stand workstations, employers can embrace movement in a way that has a positive impact on employee health and productivity every day.*”

– **Betsey Banker**, CWWPM, CWWS, wellness manager, Ergotron

“*The social conditions that promote inactivity have been building for decades. It is so easy now not to move. But the consequences are also becoming more obvious. Inactivity is associated with so many health problems and premature death. I believe that as people consider what it means to have a high-quality life, there will be a shift in behavior. Do we want to spend our lives on the couch surrounded by empty pizza boxes? Sure, some people might. But I think that most of us want healthy workplaces, schools and homes. We want our children and loved ones and ourselves to be well. To achieve that, we must move more.*”

– **Russell Pate, Ph.D.**, professor of public health at the University of South Carolina in Columbia and chairman of the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance<sup>12</sup>

“*The employer's ultimate objective, should be to create a wellness culture in the workplace by means of its legal and moral wellness programs and other healthy-lifestyle measures. A company's investments in its employees' health and wellness will pay off for the company in the long-run and naturally will benefit the employees, their co-workers, families, communities, and society as a whole.*”

– **Bahaudin G. Mujtaba, Ph.D., and Frank J. Cavico, J.D.**, as published in the International Journal of Health Policy and Management (2013)<sup>13</sup>

# CONCLUSION

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## **After analyzing the views of 1,000 full-time employees on their attitudes towards prolonged sitting, a few key trends emerged.**

The biggest obstacle to employee productivity is not cyberloafing, it's restlessness from prolonged sitting and a lack of movement. This is not only cause for distraction, it's also a cause of discomfort for employees, which can be a silent attack on company culture.

The increased focus on employee wellness and happiness has pushed employers to invest in a variety of new perks and benefits to attract and retain employees, such as flexible work schedules and

healthy snack delivery. However, organizations are often missing one of the most obvious points of employee dissatisfaction: sedentary work environments.

Employees are becoming more aware of sitting disease and the benefits of standing, and as a result, are requesting alternative solutions from their employers. As employers continue to embrace employee wellness programs, research suggests that a sit-stand workstyle is a viable means to promote employee and company vitality. In the coming weeks, months and years it is our hope that awareness will reach a tipping point, and that widespread understanding will influence both healthy movement in employee lifestyles and the corporate workplace.



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### METHODOLOGY

The second JustStand Index was commissioned by Ergotron and fielded by independent panel research firm Research Now from September 23 to October 2, 2015. The responses were generated from a survey of 1,000 people who self-identified as full-time employees. All respondents are age 18 or older and living in the continental United States.

## ABOUT JUSTSTAND.ORG

Recognizing a gap in public understanding around the dangers of excessive sitting and impact on individuals, businesses and organizations, Ergotron launched JustStand.org in 2010.

The mission of the site is to provide tools and resources for people, media, businesses, schools and researchers to help raise awareness of the dangers of prolonged sitting; and secondly, raise awareness and draw attention to the simple remedy of standing and moving more throughout one's day.

For more, please visit [www.juststand.org](http://www.juststand.org).

## ERGOTRON'S COMMITMENT TO WELLNESS

Ergotron, a Nortek company, delivers adjustable and innovative technology furniture and mounts that promote healthier, more productive environments for life and work. Scientific research and evidence-based data is the wellspring for Ergotron's product development.

In collaboration with academic and research organizations, Ergotron examines categories of risk: musculoskeletal, psycho-social, cardiovascular and metabolic. Studies using Ergotron's flagship WorkFit® and LearnFit® products have collected data to measure the difference that stand-up interventions can make on back pain, heart rate, caloric intake/expenditure, blood sugar, mood states and other health indicators\*. In addition, Ergotron has been influential in research published by leading organizations and scientific journals, like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the British Journal of Medicine.

Learn more about this field of study at [www.research.juststand.org](http://www.research.juststand.org).  
Learn more about Ergotron visit [www.ergotron.com](http://www.ergotron.com).

\*Ergotron devices are not intended to cure, treat, mitigate or prevent any disease.