Best Practices for Postural Variation at Work

Your body is designed to move throughout the day. Use these tips to incorporate more varied and dynamic movement into your workday to reduce static postures and counteract prolonged sitting.

• Incorporate as many tips as possible from each section
• Work with your supervisor to find ways that work best in your specific work environment

Workflow:

□ Rotate between different types of work tasks as frequently as possible
□ Break up repetitive tasks with other tasks that use different muscle groups; i.e. do paperwork, brainstorm, meet with someone, or pick up mail in between periods of computer work
□ Set time limits for certain tasks; i.e. schedule phone calls after one hour of sending emails
□ Move between dedicated work zones with adequate space to support different work tasks
□ Use the printer/fax/copier furthest away from your desk
□ Place filing cabinets and waste/recycling bins far away so you need to get up to use these
□ Learn and practice advanced software skills and shortcuts for frequently-used software including Word and Excel in order to reduce unwanted mouse clicks and free up your time for other types of tasks
□ Set extra reminders to take breaks while working on projects and deadlines

Meetings and phone calls:

□ Coordinate walking meetings
□ Walk to communicate with coworkers face-to-face instead of calling, emailing, or texting
□ Stand, move around or take a stretch break during long meetings and presentations
□ Stand and shift your weight from side-to-side while on the phone or during webinars
□ Use a wireless headset to allow more movement

Travel and transportation:

□ Take the stairs whenever possible
□ Walk instead of driving or taking the shuttle
□ Ease travel by using a backpack or rolling bag and by wearing supportive and comfortable shoes
□ Use the restroom on another floor or take the long way

Postural breaks:

□ Move or stretch at least 3-4 minutes every hour; use a break software program or a timer as a reminder
□ Relax your hands and shoulders when waiting for your computer to load
□ Stand to think for a few moments when possible, for example before responding to an email
□ Take a quick movement break to stimulate or settle your thoughts
□ Roll your shoulders, fidget, and move your feet and ankles to improve circulation
□ Walk to get more water and stay hydrated throughout the day
□ Change your position or posture often for comfort and to offset fatigue
□ Use your work breaks for enjoyable activities – away from the computer and phone
□ Eat your lunch away from your desk
□ Know your limits and monitor habits so you can make effective changes

More information:

• Take the UCSF Office Ergonomics eCourse and Self Evaluation
• Install break software on your computer or phone; ensure settings are customized to work for you
• 50 Ways to Move More at Work
• Sitting/Standing: Fatigue and Postural Variation
• Checklist for Electric Height-Adjustable Desks
• Daily Stretching Exercises
• Keyboard Shortcuts