



LIFESTYLE

Dealing with a sedentary life

Modern advances make our lives easier, but they've led many of us to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle. Much of our lives require us to stop moving. Moving less and sitting more is linked to several health conditions and is believed to be a significant cause of the obesity epidemic.

Take a second to see how your day looks. If it's working at a desk or in one place, followed by home, then dinner, TV and bed, is it any wonder you can't fit in any exercise?

The risks posed by a sedentary lifestyle have made people more aware of how to prevent them. We become more active in finding ways to work more efficiently and perform tasks more conveniently. Today's trends at work and home are demanding. That's why it is crucial to find ways to prevent the adverse effects of sedentary living.

TIPS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER TO AVOID A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE

Keeping an active lifestyle is one of the major ways to keep yourself away from the perils of a sedentary lifestyle. Check the following tips and apply them in your daily living to achieve an active and healthier way of living.

- Choose to stay healthy and fit. Be aware of how to keep your body fit and healthy. Choose healthy foods and drinks. Have regular exercise to keep yourself feeling active.
- Take a walk or go cycling when going to your work. If you can reach your workplace in a matter of

minutes, take a walk instead of riding in a vehicle. Cycling can also help to keep you moving. This will also help you avoid being stagnant and keep moving.

- Do some types of stretching. You can do it while you're at your desk or while at home before doing some chores. By doing some stretching, you can keep good circulation throughout the body.
- Gain the benefits of standing desks, converters, or sit-stand desks. More and more companies are getting on the benefits of applying ergonomics in the workplace. This includes utilising ergonomic equipment such as wobble chairs, standing desks, and converters. They are proven to lessen the adverse effects of a sedentary lifestyle.
- Instead of calling or sending an email, you can do it by delivering the message to your colleagues. If you have something to tell your workmates about work, you can walk around the office and tell them. This can be another technique to keep yourself moving.
- Try not to have lunch while working at your desk. Do not miss your lunch to keep

you physically and mentally active the whole day.

- Take a break for 5-10 minutes. A job can be overwhelming throughout the day due to deadlines and tedious tasks to be completed. It is imperative to take a 10-minute break to avoid too much strain.
- Have a standing meeting. Usually, meetings can last for several hours; thus, sitting can be for hours, too. This is the reason why standing during meetings is also promoted.
- Take the stairs instead. Using the stairs instead of the elevators is smarter to keep you more active. You can make it a habit, so this can be a simple yet effective health routine.

Keeping yourself away from a sedentary lifestyle can be both a daunting and exciting experience. Be responsible and consistent in doing things that will help you avoid the adverse effects of being sedentary. Make sure to get updated on the current trends and innovations, so you'll not miss the strategies on how to stay comfortable and healthy at work and at home.¹



FITNESS

Ergonomic issues and precautions

Ergonomics focuses on the work environment - considering the design and function of tools, lighting, controls, displays, and workstations to fit the physical requirements of the employee. Unfortunately, although numerous studies have proven how helpful ergonomics can be, many workers and employers still don't understand how a lack of ergonomics negatively impacts health.

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are illnesses or injuries to the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, arms, legs, neck, or lower back. MSDs are caused or made worse by muscular force for a long time, repetitious movement, constant vibration, and contact stress. Ergonomics tries to find solutions to solve MSDs, and these solutions usually involve changing tools, equipment, materials, work methods, or the work environment. The number of women is growing fast in the workforce, but unfortunately, women have a higher chance of getting MSDs than men. This higher rate is due to job and physical differences between men and women.

According to a report, a woman's hand is approximately 2 cm shorter than a man which can lead to uncomfortable usage and inappropriate placement of hand tools. Looking a little lower down the body, the joint angle of the knee is wider in women due to broader hips. This can cause more strain on knees in women than men in instances involving standing for long periods.

Many ergonomics-related injuries can happen gradually - over a long period of time, and often in a manner that means you don't notice them until the discomfort has grown to a significant level. Various disorders arise from the impact of numerous small stresses and injuries to the body - referred to as CTDs, or Cumulative Trauma Disorders. These particular issues are most common within the electronic work environment of today - wherein most people spend several hours a day hunched over a keyboard or working at a computer. Poor posture and ergonomics are the leading cause of CTDs, but it's also worth noting that there are several factors that can also speed up their development, including personal risk factors, inadequate recovery time, excessive force, repetitive motion, and contact stressors.

Those suffering from CTDs can experience various symptoms within the affected area of their body, including pain, aching, numbness, swelling and tingling.

In general, the workstation should be adjustable to reduce awkward postures and accommodate the woman's body. Women in jobs where they sit a lot may develop low back pain, which may be relieved with a proper chair with a

supporting lumbar backrest and a footrest. The workstation should be adjustable so that women may work either sitting or standing to allow frequent changes in posture.

Prolonged sitting or standing are leading risk factors for problems in the back. Walking causes the leg veins to pump blood upward from the feet and helps prevent minor swelling of the ankles. Pressure from the firm edge of seat pans that can obstruct leg veins when sitting should be avoided because it may cause blood clots.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

It's easy to see that poor ergonomics can have a huge impact on your lifestyle and well-being. Fortunately, setting up your workstation doesn't have to be a difficult task. The idea is to set up an adjustable station, allowing workers to change their posture according to their needs. Ergonomic offices should include adjustable display screens, flexible copyholders, proper lighting, adjustable and detachable keyboards, and the right ergonomic furniture.²



LIVING WELL

Handling depression and anxiety during menstruation

Most people who menstruate will experience some symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS). Periods can cause plenty of uncomfortable symptoms. These symptoms vary from person to person, but they often extend beyond physical discomforts, like cramps, fatigue, and headaches.

Depression and other mood changes often show up in the days before your period starts, but they don't automatically disappear once it begins. They can linger for a few days, if not longer. Some people also experience depression after their period ends.

After ovulation, which occurs midcycle, the levels of the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone begin to fall. Rising and falling levels of these hormones can affect brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. Serotonin and dopamine are examples of neurotransmitters which are both chemicals that influence mood, sleep, and motivation.

Low levels of serotonin and dopamine can cause the following symptoms, which are common with PMS:

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Sleep problems
- Food cravings

When the levels of estrogen and progesterone begin to rise again a few days after the onset of a period, these symptoms often go away.

TRACK YOUR SYMPTOMS

Keep track of your symptoms throughout the phases of your menstrual cycle. This may help you determine whether your symptoms of depression are connected to your cycle. Having a detailed log of symptoms from your last few menstrual cycles can also come in handy when you want to discuss depression before and during periods with your healthcare provider. Thorough documentation of your symptoms may make it easier to explain to your healthcare provider what you're experiencing.

VITAMINS & SUPPLEMENTS

Some supplements may help relieve symptoms of depression before and during periods. It was found that a calcium supplement may reduce PMS-related tiredness, appetite changes, and depression. Great sources of calcium include milk, cheese, yoghurt, fortified cereals, orange juice, and leafy green vegetables. A daily calcium supplement is another way to get enough calcium.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

You can make the following lifestyle changes to relieve the symptoms of depression before and during periods.

EXERCISE

Try to be physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes most days of the week. Even going for a daily walk through your neighbourhood might improve your

symptoms of fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and depression with your period.

NUTRITION

Try to resist the cravings that often accompany premenstrual syndrome. For some people, eating excessive sugar, salt, and fat can have a negative impact on mood. You don't have to avoid these foods completely, but strike a balance with vegetables, whole grains, and fruits. Avoiding alcohol, stopping smoking, and cutting back on caffeine may also help relieve symptoms of depression with periods and before it.

SLEEP

Sleep for at least seven to eight hours per night, especially a week or two before your period. Not having enough sleep may make your depression worse during your period.

STRESS

Unmanaged stress may worsen symptoms of depression during periods. Use relaxation techniques like meditation, yoga, mindfulness, and deep breathing exercises to calm your body and mind. Avoid emotional and stressful triggers whenever possible.

Symptoms of depression before and during periods can often be managed with lifestyle changes and antidepressants.³



MIND, BODY & SOUL

Advantages of music therapy in general and mental health

Music therapy can be a beneficial and pleasurable way to lessen the symptoms of many ailments, including depression, mood swings, and anxiety, even if it cannot treat any mental health conditions. Through music therapy, people can communicate their feelings and experiences in a special and approachable way. Ancient civilisations had a strong musical tradition, which is present in all cultures today. However, music is now understood to be essential to overall health and well-being. Our brains release dopamine and serotonin when we listen to energetic, enjoyable music, which makes us feel happy. On the other side, quiet music encourages peace and relaxation.

Music is a universal human trait. The healing power of music has been acknowledged in almost all traditions of music. Music therapy is moving from a social-science model focusing on overall health and well-being towards a neuroscience model focusing on specific elements of music and its effect on sensorimotor, language and cognitive functions. A handful of evidence-based music therapy studies on

psychiatric conditions have shown promising results.

Music therapy is an evidence-based treatment that helps with a variety of disorders, including cardiac conditions, depression, autism, substance abuse and Alzheimer's disease. It can help with memory, lower blood pressure, improve coping, reduce stress, improve self-esteem and more.

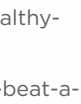
Music therapy may help you psychologically, emotionally, physically, spiritually, cognitively and socially. When used in conjunction with conventional therapies like talking therapy, research demonstrates that music therapy is effective in reducing the symptoms of depression. Dopamine, a hormone released by music, and endorphins both contribute to the "feel good" emotions that people experience. It also helps to encourage self-expression, improves social connection, and enhances the mood of patients.

Music helps people feel more confident, relaxed, and emotionally healed. Additionally, music can help those who have endured traumatic events and can aid people in managing pressure and stress.

- Helps with anxiety
- Reduces stress
- Improve symptoms of depression
- Improves cognitive functions and delays Alzheimer's
- Promotes emotional wellness

People have listened to music for a very long time because it can have a good effect on their moods and emotions. Music therapy has many other benefits in addition to helping with mental health difficulties, such as providing a creative outlet, strengthening education and cultural awareness, and improving cognitive skills like memory.

Many therapies can help individuals improve their emotional growth, social skills, and motor control. Music therapy is no exception to these benefits. Some may say music therapy goes a step beyond normal therapies by helping to change the brain. Music can retrain certain cognitive abilities and promote behavioural changes. But, as great as this all sounds, music therapy does have its cons. Music does have a powerful impact on our emotions and our physical health.⁴



Sources:

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⁴ Leonard, J. (2020, January 15). Depression during period: Everything you need to know. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/327490>

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