

The Super Slow Silent Killer

Written by Ian Hart

Wednesday, 10 November 2010 12:46



Be careful. There may be a slow, silent killer lurking around you. In fact, you may have numerous versions of this slow, silent killer throughout your home, office and car. You may love it as if it was your best friend, but it's that kind of friend that you know isn't really good for you and is most often a bad influence. You have a relationship with this killer that you probably already know should have been broken off a long time ago, but you don't know how to break it off and maybe you are a little scared and uncomfortable with ending such a long relationship. But you can fight back. And all you have to do is stand up... literally.

This slow, silent killer that I am speaking about is your desk chair, your couch, car seat and anything else that allows you to be sedentary. New evidence reveals that the more time you spend with this "friend" the more likely you are at risk of dying an early death. A recent Men's Health article cited a 2010 study in the Journal of Applied Physiology, which found that "when healthy men limited their number of footsteps by 85 percent for 2 weeks, they experienced a 17 percent decrease in [insulin](#) sensitivity, raising their diabetes risk". I know what you might be thinking: well I work out 2-3 times a week so I am fine. The evidence suggests that regardless of that you are still at risk if you sit all day long. With the proper training you can combat this issue, but regular exercise or a traditional workout is not the same as living an active lifestyle. The risk of sitting all day is not just confined to your insulin levels. It also severely affects your heart as well as your hips, lower, middle and upper back, SI joint (where the pelvis and spine meet), shoulders, and the list goes on and on.

Everything on the body is connected, so if one thing is out of balance from sitting, then something else will follow. Statistics show that we are working out about the same as 30 years ago, but the time that we spend in our comfortable chairs has risen by 8%. So how do we battle this friend-turned-foe? To combat the effects of sitting all day and causing a chain reaction of musculoskeletal issues, a few things need to be done:

1. Stand while working: this simple change can burn as much as 500 more calories a day and

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prevent protraction and hyperkyphosis, which is basically the hunchbacked look - and nobody wants a hunchback. It will also help you engage your core for longer.

2. If you absolutely need to sit, try sitting on a stability ball: this will force you to engage your core more, improving your posture and burning as much as 200 more calories a day.

3. Stretch: regularly get up from your seat and stretch out your muscles. Two quick stretches – (1) get on your tippy toes and reach for the ceiling as high as you can; (2) squeeze your shoulder blades back and open up your arms as far as you can.

4. Walk the stairs: When you have breaks, walk up and down the stairs for 5 to 10 minutes; it will surely increase your blood flow and oxygen intake, which will prevent decreases in insulin sensitivity and help strengthen your legs, as well as improve stability.

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