



Are sit-stand workstations worth the hype?

Study found limited effectiveness of sit-stand desks

Research by the Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program found that employees were given sit-stand workstations, but were not given instructions on how to use the desk to prevent injuries. Researchers found that few employees used the standing feature and those that did, did not have better outcomes for musculoskeletal issues. According to data collected on how hard muscles were working — repetitive motion injuries were still a risk.

Findings

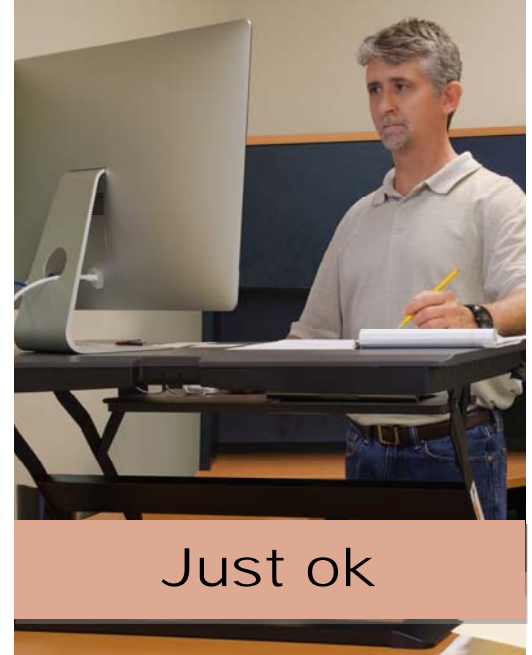
- Few workers chose to use the standing feature.
- Muscle strain shifted to other muscle groups when workers stood, so risk of repetitive motion injuries was not removed by using the standing feature.
- Workers that used applications to send break reminders had better results than those who did not.
- More research is needed to develop recommendations for using sit-stand workstations to decrease strain.

Recommendations for workers

Stop to rest. Take micro breaks to give muscle groups rest. Micro breaks can be taking 1 minute every 30 minutes to do something else that gives muscle groups a rest. This can include doing a different task like taking a break from typing to make a phone call.

Leave your desk. Leaving the workstation during breaks improves health.

Use reminder apps. Applications that remind workers to stop and rest or include light stretches improve outcomes.



Recommendations attributed to findings of: Lin, J. Bao, S. Office Ergonomics Evaluation in a Naturalistic Work Environment. Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, Technical Report Number 62-3-2016. <https://lni.wa.gov/da/aceee14699/OfficeErgoEvalNaturalisticWorkEnvironment.pdf>