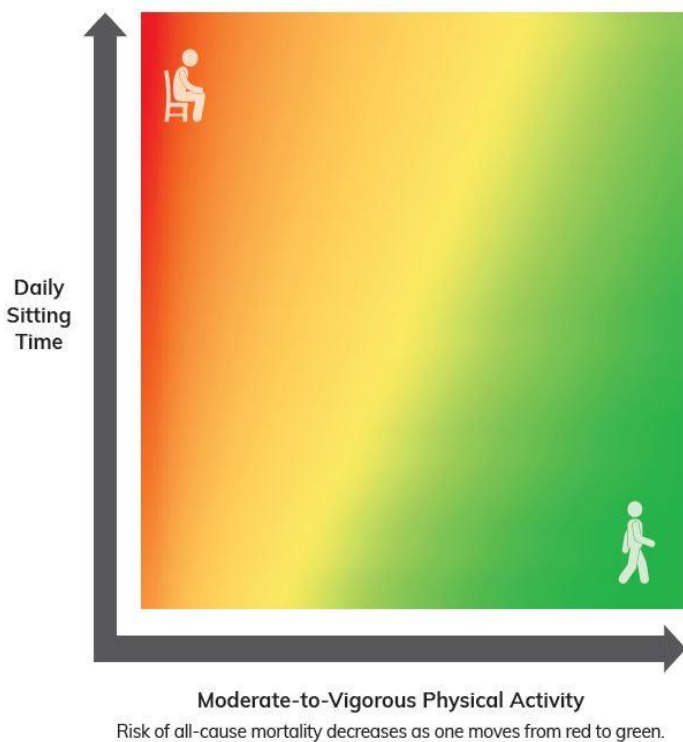# Stop Sitting!

The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines highlighted that both adults and children spend about 55%, or 7.7 hours a day in sedentary behavior. Simply stated, sedentary behavior includes things like sitting and/or lying down. The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines also highlights that there is "strong evidence" linking sedentary behavior to higher risk of mortality from all causes. There was also moderate evidence linking sedentary behavior to certain cancers, such as colon, endometrial, and lung. While many of our lives are full of mandatory sedentary activities, we hope the information in this flyer and some of the practical suggestions can help decrease our time spent in the sedentary category by choice!


Daily Sitting Time

Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity

Risk of all-cause mortality decreases as one moves from red to green.

The graph to the left has some good news… and some potential bad news. Before we jump to that lets make sure we define the terms. The up arrow, or "y" axis, represents time spent in sedentary behavior. The arrow moving across, or the "x" axis, represents moderate-to-vigorous activity (see flyer last week for definitions). The color represents the risk of all causes of mortality. You guessed it- red is bad, green is good. What you notice is as sitting time decreases the amount of time we need to exercise to get into the "green" decreases as well. Sadly, as we sit more the amount of time we need to exercise to get back into the "green" increases as well. This means we can't always "make-up" a full day of sitting with 20-30 minutes of exercise. The good news – research has shown just breaking up our sedentary time is beneficial. That's why your smartwatch or Fitbit buzzes every hour.

The graph to the right is really busy, sorry about that! There is one really big take home we want to highlight, though. The up and down, or the "y" axis, shows the risk of all-cause mortality (higher is worse). The "across," or "x" axis, shows exercise time. As you move right total time increases. The star on the graph shows that as you move from no exercise at all to only a little bit the slope of the graph is the steepest. This means that going from nothing to something has huge benefits! A 2-3 minute walk around the office adds up and moves you from "nothing" to "something!"

Figure 2-1. Relationship of Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity to All-Cause Mortality

Murat Dalkilinç | TED-Ed
Why sitting is bad for you

4:50
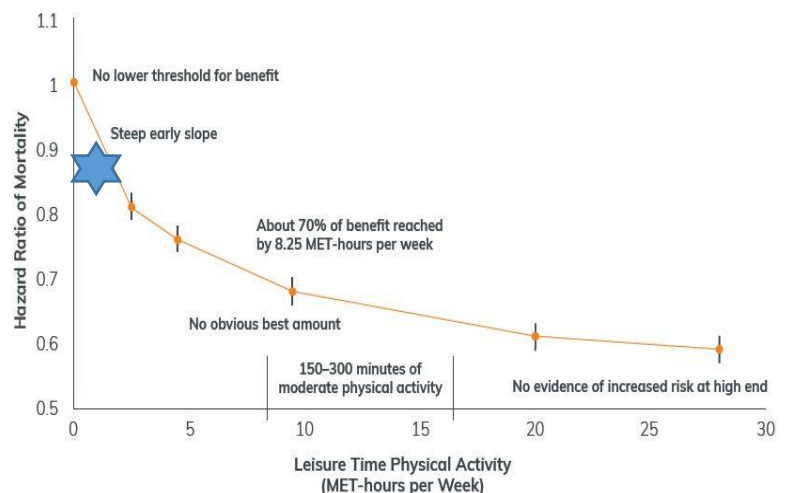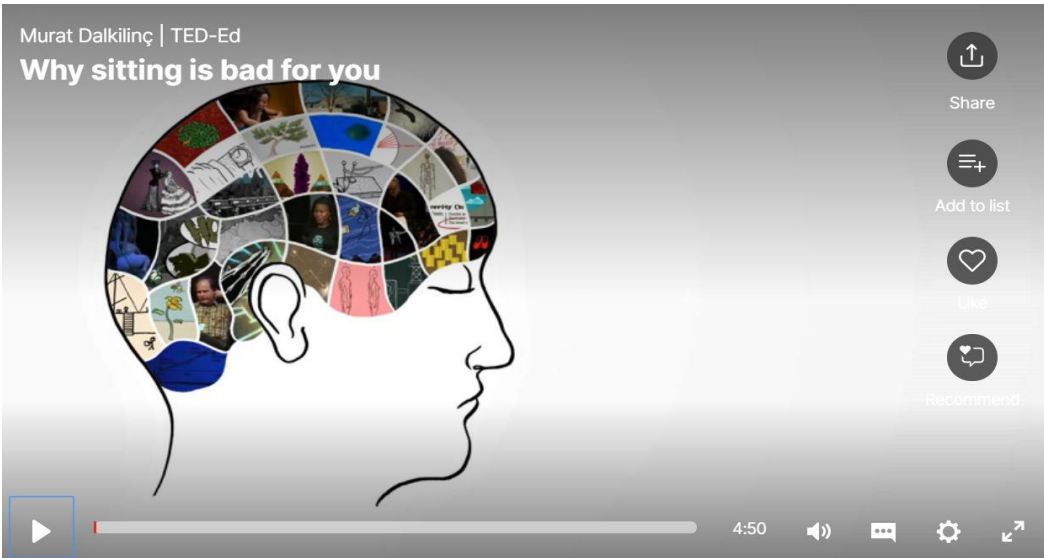
To this point we have highlighted a lot of the data surrounding risk of death, cancer, and metabolic diseases. While sedentary behavior can increase the risk of all of that, it can also have a large effect on how your body functions in the moment. The video to the left highlights how our bodies were designed… not to sit for long!

I am convinced sitting is not good for me, but now what?

The first step is to admit we choose to sit. Reflect back on your day for a moment. Out of all the times you sat was there ever an option to stand? If you answered no we can't help you. Most likely, though, you can find some time throughout the day were you could sit less and stand/move more. The exciting news is, as the one graph showed on the first page, simply choosing to sit less leads to better things, even if you don't replace it with intense exercise! If you are struggling to brainstorm a bit here are a few suggestions

Schedule your next meeting or group project at the indoor track. Two things will happen. First, you will be amazed at how much clearer you think and brainstorm (there is research to back this up). Second, the time the meeting lasts will decrease significantly. It's a win/win!

Invest in a standing desk for home or office use. Like most investments, it will cost some up front, but will be worth it in the long run.

If you know you are about to sit for a long time set a timer. Remember, breaking up your long bouts of sedentary activity can be incredibly beneficial!

Find a quick office exercise routine. There is a lot you can do without even standing. Changing posture and moving a bit can go along way!

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