

SAFETY TALK

— Ergonomics

The Benefits of Micro Breaks

PICTURE THIS

You arrive at work, say good morning to your co-workers, and maybe get a cup of coffee or some water. It's 8:00 a.m. and you log into your computer. The next thing you know, it's 10:00 a.m., and you haven't moved at all since you logged in. That's not good. Almost a third of your day has gone by, and you haven't given your muscles a chance to relax and refresh.



WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT SITTING?

Maintaining balance and an upright posture throughout the day requires a lot of energy. This is important to know because this energy gets converted into lactic acid. It's lactic acid that makes us sore, tired, and stiff. Moving increases the blood flow, which removes lactic acid. If you're stationary for long periods, you're forcing your muscles to work without being refreshed with an enriched blood supply.

MICRO BREAKS

To keep the blood flowing and your muscles fed, you should get up from your desk and move around. Start with a brisk walk. Why a brisk walk? It stimulates the heart rate and increases circulation, which circulates blood directly to muscles that need it the most. Ideally, we recommend a 1-2 minute micro break every hour. You could take a short walk around the office, go to the restroom, get something to drink.

A couple times a day you may want to include a stretching routine in your micro breaks. Stretching relaxes your muscles and increases blood flow. To get the maximum benefit hold your stretch for about 30 seconds. Here are some stretches you can try.

Arm Cross	Side Lean	Praying Hands
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lift one arm out straight in front of you; ▪ Move that arm across your body; ▪ Bring the other arm up and grab your arm just past the elbow; ▪ Pull the straight arm lightly toward underneath your chin; ▪ Hold for 30 seconds, and repeat with the other arm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sit up in your chair; ▪ Hold the bottom of your chair with one hand; ▪ Tip your head in the opposite direction; ▪ Lean slightly toward the side you tipped your head; ▪ Hold the stretch for 30 seconds; ▪ Repeat on the other side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Place your palms together; ▪ Raise your elbows up; ▪ Do not let your palms come apart; ▪ Do not push your hands together; ▪ Hold for 30 seconds