

It's Quitting Time for Sitting

The human body is designed to move. Yet, many Americans spend at least half their waking time sitting—in cars, on sofas and in front of phones, TVs and computers. Sitting too much is now a recognized health hazard.

What's too much? Sitting for 6 or more hours a day, your risk of premature death increases 19%, compared with people who sit fewer than 3 hours, according to the American Cancer Society. The Society's 21-year study followed more than 127,000 people who had no major chronic diseases when they joined the group; during the study (1993-2014) nearly 49,000 died.

Those reporting the most leisure time sitting had higher risks of death from numerous medical conditions including cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and musculoskeletal disorders.

Sitting hunched over a desk or driving for long periods constricts the muscles, causing tension, fatigue and pain. To ease discomfort and reduce long-term health risks of inactivity, loosen up: Take frequent, short movement breaks throughout your day.

Stand up as often as possible as you read, watch TV or talk or text on your phone, or to walk around. Learn to "tuck in" simple core stretches at your desk.

Here's an example from ACE Fitness:

1. Stand upright, "fingers clasped behind your head; relax your neck.
2. Turn your head toward your left elbow.
3. Lean your upper body to the right; no bending forward or backward.
4. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side.

Growing Teens into Healthy Adults

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Convincing teens to eat well, exercise and get enough sleep is not always easy, especially when parents are competing with junk food advertising and binge-worthy shows that keep kids on the sofa for hours. And there's still peer pressure to deal with.

Here are 5 tips to help you positively influence your teen's life choices as they navigate puberty and growth spurts:

1. Trust them to know their appetite. They should eat when they are hungry and stop when full. Don't berate them for wanting seconds, or for eating more 1 day than the next— that's normal as they grow.
2. Teach by example. Teens will mirror your food choices and your view of your own body. Eat well and be positive about what you love about yourself—and them.
3. Teach moderation. Teens are independent and make many of their own food choices. That often means fast food, sugary beverages, salty snacks and candy. That's okay sometimes. Explain it in terms they can understand, such as the 80/20 idea: Eat well 80% of the time, and enjoy treats 20% of the time.
4. Sleep matters. How tall your child will be is mostly determined by genetics, but factors such as eating well, getting enough sleep and being active also matter. Human growth hormone is mostly released while a child is asleep, so encourage a normal bedtime.
5. Make healthy choices easy. Keep nutritious grab-and-go snacks

