



SQUEEZE YOUR BUTT CHEEKS

MEMBER ARTICLE | BY CHRISTI BINTLIFF, MAADOM

Do you ever feel like your butt is stuck to your chair? Let's face it; once we get into work we sit down and start plugging away.

While sitting helps you slay your daily goals and seems to speed up your productivity, it could also be posing a serious occupational health and safety problem, thus slowing down productivity in the long run.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) one in four Americans sits for longer than eight hours every day, and you guessed it, they are sitting behind an office desk.

In 2017, a study referred to it as "Sitting is the new smoking." At that time, many work environments responded by offering standing desks; however, as studies continued, it became apparent that just standing was not enough.

Although sitting requires less muscular effort, it is not an exemption from the injury risks that are commonly associated with jobs that are physically demanding.

Prolonged sitting contributes to a variety of health-related conditions such as obesity, chronic joint pain, fatigue, back pain, premature disc degeneration, heart problems, diabetes, deep vein thrombosis, varicose veins, stiff necks, numbness in legs, muscle tenderness or weakness, mental health illnesses, and even cancer.

According to the World Health Organization, physical inactivity contributes to more than three million preventable deaths every year, ranking it as the fourth leading cause of death occurring from a non-communicable disease. The risks significantly increase

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with every two hours of sitting. Alarming, isn't it? What have I learned? WE NEED TO MOVE!

Movement is a key component to reducing the occupational health risks associated with a sedentary work environment.

Here are simple solutions to create sustainable acts of movement throughout your workday:

SIT ON THIS

We seldom consider that the pressure on the backside of the thighs increases with a seat that is too high.

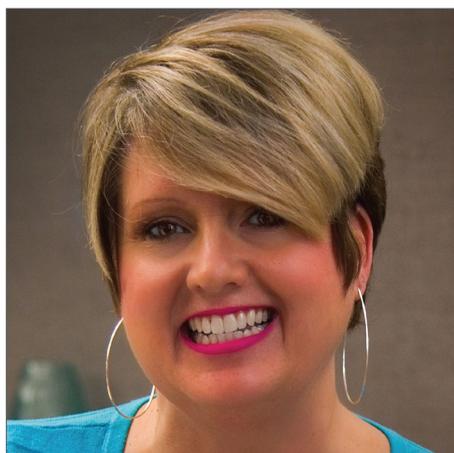
[SQUEEZE CONTINUED | PAGE 17](#)

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We also don't consider that the position of the backrest could be contributing to back pain.

Ideally, we should have a fully adjustable chair that can accommodate the maximum range of people (typically 90 to 95 percent of the population). It must have controls to allow easy adjustment of the seat height and tilt, as well as the backrest height and angle.

Making simple adjustments to the height or back of your chair could help reduce the discomfort and create better circulation.



MEET THE MEMBER

Christi Bintliff, MAADOM is a Practice Administrator and in-house coach for a multi-doctor dental practice in Durham, North Carolina. She is also a dental performance and development consultant with more than 30 plus years of hands-on experience in dental practice leadership and management. In 2019, she successfully launched her consulting company, LEAP 2 Solutions.

In her spare time, she enjoys DIY home projects, upcycling and repurposing discarded items in the most unexpected ways, and landscaping/gardening.

If that does not work, swapping out your old chair can do wonders. There are a tremendous number of innovative chairs and stools specifically designed to create motion seating. They continuously change the angle and automatically stimulate/activate various muscles in your back, core, and legs, creating an increase in circulation, and reducing muscle fatigue and inflammation.

Research, review, and physically sit in the chair to make sure that is comfortable, functional and stimulates movement.

OFFICE REMIX

By placing the printer, copy machine, filing cabinets and other office items away from your immediate reach, you are forced to get up and walk or reach them when needed.

CRANK UP THE MUSIC

Music is a great movement motivator. You will quickly find yourself "chair dancing" (yes, it's a thing) when you start listening to your favorite music station. Upbeat music naturally elevates your heart rate and has you moving, which increases circulation.

ELEVATE YOUR WORKSTATION

Sitting at a desk does not have to be stationary! If you have a traditional desk, consider adding a standing desk converter. This affordable sit-and-stand desk provides the option of sitting or standing while you work.

A more costly option is a crank or electric adjustable sit-and-stand desk, which also allows you to easily choose to sit on a chair or

stand while using it, depending on your tasks.

Here is a fun fact. Standing for three hours per day can burn up to 30,000 calories over the course of a year. WOW! That's movement, motivation, and momentum in all the right direction.

GO WITH THE FLOW

When we think of yoga, we think of standing, twisting, and stretching the body in a variety of positions; but did you know that chair yoga allows you to stay in your normal work clothes while performing a variety of poses in your chair?

Chair yoga can help relieve the tension, inflammation, and fatigue by getting blood flowing, which is beneficial to anyone sitting long hours at a desk.

Your smart phone, Fitbit, and Smartwatch now can prompt you to stand, walk and breathe.

During breaks, incorporate time to stretch, do squats, arm rolls and even push-ups or sit-ups. You could also incorporate traditional yoga poses during breaks.

Squeeze in a short, high-intensity workout during lunch.

Drink more water. More water means more bathroom breaks and another excuse to get up.

And as Kim McQueen once said, "squeeze those butt cheeks". Stand up and do a couple of reps, which should get the blood flowing, or at least having you laughing hysterically. Sorry Kim, it seemed like an appropriate place to insert those infamous words of wisdom.

SQUEEZE CONTINUED | PAGE 18

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YOUR POSTURE

Poor posture can lead to bone damage, decreased blood circulation, fatigue, and loss of muscle strength. If you must sit, keep your shoulders back, your chin tucked, and your stomach pulled toward your spine to keep muscles engaged, bones aligned, and circulation flowing.

TALKING AND WALKING POINTS

Take phone or zoom meetings on the move! Walk while you talk.

Change those one-on-one meetings and group meetings to walking meetings geared to create movement, motivation, and momentum. You will be burning calories while encouraging the brain to release endorphins that boost mental clarity and energy, while also decreasing sensitivity to stress and increasing creativity by 81-100%.

Incorporate five minutes of moderate to vigorous activity, such as walking for every hour of sitting. These breaks are beneficial to the heart, lungs, and muscles.

At lunch, walk to a restaurant or park a distance away in order to create a walking opportunity. Remember to feed your body with healthy choices!

At the beginning and end of the day, take the stairs instead of the elevators and park in the farthest spot so it forces you to walk a distance to and from the office door. Incorporate a brisk walk as part of your lunch break.

OVERALL IMPROVED HEALTH

According to the Heart Foundation, people who sit the most, compared to people who sit the least, have a greater risk of disease and death: 112% increased risk of diabetes, 147% increased risk of cardiovascular events like heart

attack and stroke, 90% increased risk of death from cardiovascular events, and 49% increased risk of death from any cause.

Therefore, it makes sense that incorporating physical activity throughout our workday increases blood flow to reduce the amount of fatty acid buildup in the blood vessels, could prevent insulin resistance which causes type 2 diabetes and obesity, significantly reduces the risk of blood clots, and increases the body's production of lipoprotein lipase (an enzyme essential for breaking down fat) to keep fat from being stored.

In the long run, happy, relaxed, and healthy employees mean higher productivity for all. We must change the way we view our workday by adapting creative opportunities to get us moving in the right direction; stand up and squeeze. ■

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The banner features a group photo of seven dental office professionals (four women and three men) standing together in a modern office setting. The background is a dark blue gradient with yellow and white text and graphics.