

Advantages and Disadvantages of Sit Stand Desks

Special Report From Dr Craig Hindson BEng DC
Your Chiropractor in Ottawa



Advantages and Disadvantages of Standing Desks

Standing desks—sometimes called sit-stand desks—have become increasingly popular in modern workplaces as concerns about prolonged sitting and sedentary lifestyles grow. They are marketed as a solution to “sitting disease,” offering an alternative to traditional desks. Like most workplace interventions, however, they have both benefits and drawbacks.

Advantages

1. Improved Posture and Reduced Back Pain

One of the most cited advantages of standing desks is their positive effect on posture. Prolonged sitting can place stress on the lumbar spine and contribute to muscle imbalances, particularly tight hip flexors and weak gluteal muscles. Alternating between sitting and standing helps reduce static loading on spinal structures and can lessen the risk of developing or aggravating chronic low back pain.

2. Increased Energy and Alertness

Many users report feeling more energized while standing. Physiologically, standing promotes circulation and prevents the sluggishness associated with long periods of sitting. In work environments, this often translates into greater alertness, improved focus, and sometimes even higher productivity during specific tasks.

3. Calorie Expenditure and Metabolic Benefits

Standing burns slightly more calories than sitting—estimates suggest around 10–20 extra calories per hour. While not a substitute for exercise, over time this can contribute modestly to energy balance. Additionally, breaking up sedentary time has been linked to better regulation of blood sugar and insulin levels, potentially lowering the risk of metabolic syndrome.

4. Flexibility and Movement Opportunities

Many modern standing desks are adjustable, allowing workers to shift easily between sitting and standing. This flexibility encourages movement throughout the day and supports micro-breaks, which benefit musculoskeletal health, mental clarity, and overall well-being.

Disadvantages

1. Discomfort and Fatigue

For those people who have poor spinal health such as chronic neck or back issues standing for long periods brings its own set of problems, exacerbated neck and back pain, leg fatigue, lower limb swelling, and discomfort in the feet. Prolonged standing has also been associated with increased risk of varicose veins and joint strain, particularly if individuals lack supportive footwear or anti-fatigue mats.

2. Risk of Overuse Injuries

Just as sitting too long can harm the spine, so can standing in one position. Prolonged standing without adequate breaks can overload the hips, knees, and lower back. Users who lean awkwardly or shift weight unevenly may develop new musculoskeletal issues.

3. Productivity Trade-Offs

Although some workers feel more alert when standing, not all tasks are suited to it. Precision tasks such as writing, drawing, or detailed computer work may be more comfortably performed sitting down. In these cases, prolonged standing may decrease productivity rather than enhance it.

4. Cost and Practical Barriers

Quality adjustable sit-stand desks can be expensive compared to traditional setups. Employers must also consider ergonomic training, accessories like monitor risers or mats, and adjustments for employees of different heights. Poorly designed or improperly used standing desks can negate potential health benefits.

5. Stability and Usability Issues at Extremes of Height

There have been reports that many standing desks lose stability at their maximum height especially when heavily loaded, leading to safety concerns when being used by taller workers. Also, for shorter workers some standing desks will not lower sufficiently to accommodate a comfortable sitting position.

Conclusion

Standing desks offer an appealing solution to the health challenges posed by prolonged sitting, with notable benefits for posture, energy, and metabolic health. However, they are not a cure-all especially if an individual already has poor spinal health. Long bouts of standing bring their own risks, and effective use requires a balance of sitting, standing, and

movement throughout the day. The best approach may be a **hybrid model**—incorporating an adjustable sit-stand desk, supportive footwear, regular movement breaks, ergonomic awareness and regular tune-up visits at your chiropractic office.

Ultimately, standing desks are a useful tool when integrated into a holistic workplace wellness strategy. Their success depends less on the desk itself and more on how workers use it to encourage varied, dynamic movement throughout the day.

References and further reading

1. [Harvard Health Blog – The truth behind standing desks](#)
2. [The Guardian – Standing desks do not reduce risk of stroke and heart ...](#)
3. [PubMed Central – The Impact of Standing Desks on Cardiometabolic and ...](#)
4. [Bond Collective Blog – Standing Desks: The Benefits and Risks of Standing at Work](#)
5. [PubMed Central – Evidence of Health Risks Associated with Prolonged ...](#)
6. [Wikipedia – Complications of prolonged standing](#)
7. [Verywell Health – Should You Try a Standing Desk to Alleviate Back Pain?](#)

Coming Soon:

1. Special Report - Is treadmill walking while you are working a good idea?
2. The ULTIMATE GUIDE To Sit Stand Desks – Pros, Cons and what to avoid at all cost and what to do to optimize your set up

For Further Information on Headaches/Migraines, Upper Neck Issues & the Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Chiropractors visit Dr Craig's YouTube Channel [@DrCraigHindson](#)

For Mid and Lower Spine Issues Such as Sciatica and Hints and Tips On Extending The Life of Your Spine So You Can Do What You Love For Longer visit our [@LovingLifeChiro](#) YouTube channel.

Loving Life Chiropractic | 842 Byron Ave | Ottawa | ON K2A 0H8 | (613) 879 0959

For further information www.lovinglifechiropractic.com