



## David Fairlamb

# THE FIT FACTOR

### LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Walking away from your computer screen at regular intervals, going for a walk or taking the stairs rather than the lift are ways to incorporate active time into your day.

### FITNESS TIP

Look at ways to incorporate more exercise throughout your day, for example park your car further away from work, take the stairs rather than the lift, walk while on mobile phone calls. Over time these changes can make a real positive difference to your health and wellbeing.

Don't miss David's tips every Saturday in your Journal

**I**T'S not always easy to find the time to exercise. Even if you are aware of the NHS recommendation to do 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week (roughly 21 minutes per day), many of you may struggle to find the time for any sort of regular exercise habit.

Add that to a sedentary lifestyle, compounded by having a job that involves sitting for long periods, and it's even more important to prioritise your exercise time.

Counterbalancing the negative effects of sitting for long periods is a must from a health and wellbeing perspective. A Norwegian study recently found that people who sit for long periods, such as in an office job, driving for a living or watching TV, are more likely to die earlier. Moderate to vigorous exercise can eliminate this risk.

Regular movement, stretches, and exercises can be built into your existing daily routine. It's just a matter of prioritising the time, being consistent and motivated to continue.

Here are some tips to help you counterbalance the effects of sitting

for long periods of time:

#### **Take regular breaks**

Stand up and move around for at least five minutes every hour.

Set a timer or use a reminder app to prompt you to stand up and stretch.

#### **Desk exercises**

Perform simple exercises at your desk, such as leg lifts, seated marches, or ankle circles.

Stretch your arms, neck, and shoulders regularly.

#### **Stretching routine**

Incorporate a stretching routine into your day, focusing on areas that are commonly affected by sitting such as the backs of your legs (hamstrings) and lower back.

#### **Strengthening exercises**

Include exercises that strengthen your core muscles to support your spine. Squats, lunges and planks can be done at home and are good options.

#### **Use a standing desk**

If possible, use a standing desk to reduce the amount of time spent sitting during the day. Many employers will accommodate this now.

Alternating between sitting and

standing will help.

#### **Telephone walks**

While answering calls on your mobile, take a walk. I'm sure you would be shocked, if you are regularly on your mobile, how many steps you would take throughout your week.

#### **Walk or move during breaks**

Use any breaks to take a short walk, whether it's around the office or outside.

Consider walking meetings instead of sitting in a conference room, these are increasingly popular, try suggesting this at work.

#### **Hydration reminder**

Drink plenty of water throughout the day. This not only helps with overall health but also requires you to get up and move for toilet breaks.

#### **Ergonomic workspace**

Ensure your desk and chair are set up ergonomically to promote good posture.

Adjust your computer screen to eye level to prevent neck strain.

#### **Exercise routine**

Establish a regular exercise routine that fits around work hours. Most gyms offer early morning and



**> Build regular movement into your daily routine**

evening sessions.

#### **Mindful posture**

Pay attention to your posture while sitting. Sit with your back straight, shoulders relaxed, and feet flat on the floor.

#### **Incorporate cardiovascular exercise**

Engage in activities that get your heart rate up, such as jogging, swimming, or cycling. Employers increasingly engage with wellness partners

to keep the workforce healthy and more productive.

Remember, the key is to break up long periods of sitting with movement and exercises.

Find a routine that works for you and make it a habit to prioritise your physical wellbeing throughout the day. These movements over weeks, months and years will make a significant positive impact on your health.