

Proposal for Staff Exercise Time

Staff with desk jobs or positions that require little physical activity are at greater risk for poor health than their counterparts in non-sedentary jobs. According to recent research, sitting for long periods of the day increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and death. Findings from a 2011 study show that the average adult with a “desk job” now spends 50-60% of the day in sedentary pursuits. These long periods of sedentary activity have been linked to the following:

- 112% increase in the risk of diabetes
- 147% increase in cardiovascular events
- 90% increase in death due to cardiovascular events
- Twice the risk of a specific type of colon cancer
- Increase in upper back and neck pain
- Increase in emotional health issues
- Decrease in work performance

Also, the more sedentary the job, the more likely staff members are to be overweight or obese.

Exercise can help reduce the chances of developing the health issues cited above. Findings from the Nurses’ Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-up Study suggest that walking briskly for a half hour every day reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 30 percent. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends “...vigorous activity for a minimum of 20 minutes on three days each week” to help ward off the effects of a sedentary job.

The program outlined below will provide the exercise cited above by allowing ASU’s full-time staff up to three, one-hour exercise periods per week. This allowance will provide a direct health benefit for staff, thereby boosting morale and productivity at ASU. Additionally, this program will be no-cost for the university, and will increase staff participation in ASU’s Center for Human Performance (CHP).

Proposal Guidelines:

- ASU full-time staff in positions requiring “prolonged periods of sitting” would be allowed up to three, one-hour periods per week for exercise.
- These exercise periods are not guaranteed from week to week and are dependent upon the staff member’s duties and upon the office’s work load during the academic year. The supervisor will determine if work load and office hours permit staff exercise time on an individual basis.
- Staff must obtain a note from their doctor stating that they are cleared to exercise before they can begin this program.
- Staff will work with their supervisors to determine the best time of day for the exercise period.
- All exercise must be performed on campus.

- The one-hour exercise period includes time to travel to the gym or to the appointed place for exercise, and includes time to change into and out of exercise clothing. Maximum time away from the office is limited to one hour.
- If the session is scheduled for the first hour of the work day, the staff member must report to work before going to the gym or appointed place for exercise. (EX: Bob works an 8:00-5:00 schedule. He will check in with his supervisor or office before going to the gym or appointed place for exercise.)
- If the session is scheduled for the last hour of the work day, the staff member must report back to his/her supervisor at the conclusion of the exercise period. (EX: Bob works an 8:00-5:00 schedule and leaves the office at 4:00 to exercise. At the conclusion of his workout, he will check in with his supervisor before leaving the campus at 5:00.)

Suggested citations for this proposal:

-Pronk NP, Katz AS, Lowry M, Payfer JR. Reducing Occupational Sitting Time and Improving Worker Health: The Take-a-Stand Project, 2011. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2012;9:110323. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888.pcd9.110323>.

-Loughborough University and the University of Leicester. The primary author is being funded for a PhD in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, University of Leicester.

-Portions of this proposal were published in the [peer-reviewed](#) medical journal *Diabetologia*.