

Sit/Stand Workstations

A “sit-stand” workstation may not be for everyone. Requests for information about these products are becoming more common. Whether this is due to an increase in marketing, the release of recent studies supporting such products or simply a heightened awareness of ergonomics in general, personnel have become interested in the concept of standing when performing sedentary tasks. Recent studies show that such products have the potential to benefit some people (Pronk, Katz, Lowry & Payfer, 2011). However, while this may be encouraging, automatically switching to a “sit-stand” workstation may not be necessary.

At a recent seminar, an ergonomist reported that roughly 45% people who used a “sit-stand” workstation eventually reverted back to your traditional sitting position within 30 days. Comfort and fatigue cannot be ignored, as the standing position can be tiring in addition to adding stress to the lower joints. In addition, depending on the product, supporting tasks such as writing and using the phone may be at a sitting position height which presents additional challenges. Due to these factors coupled with costs that run from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, it is recommended that prior to purchasing a “sit-stand” workstation, the following is considered:

- Apply engineering controls such as setting up your sitting workstation correctly.
- Apply administrative control such as breaking up or reducing the time and duration of sitting.
- Apply work practice controls such as maintaining proper posture.
- If there is an injury, consult with your health care professional to explore treatment options.
- If still interested in a “sit-stand” workstation, contact Tufts approved vendors at the following link:
<http://publicsafety.tufts.edu/ehs/ergonomics/>

While a “sit-stand” workstation may benefit some, they are not for everyone. Consider other actions prior to purchasing. As always, Tufts Environmental Health and Safety is happy to assist.



The QuickStand height-adjustable workstation is an intuitive product created by the Humanscale Design Studio www.humanscale.com

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References

1. 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.