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Stand up for your health

Hey, you in the chair! Get up and you'll look better *and* live longer. **By Taffy Brodesser-Akner**

You've heard the scary stats: Women who sit for six or more hours a day have a 34 percent higher risk for early death from heart disease, cancer and diabetes than do women who sit less, regardless of how often they exercise, according to a study from the American Cancer Society. The simple fix: Lose the chair! It may sound like a pain in the tailbone, but SELF found four women who say it's a cinch. They scrapped sitting to lose weight, gain energy and knock out pain—and succeeded. And, says James A. Levine, M.D., an inactivity expert and professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic, they're nabbing a longer life and lower risk for disease while they're at it. You can, too.



Burn as you earn: Standing erases three times as many calories as sitting.

Monica Montiel

PROGRAM COORDINATOR, 27, PHILADELPHIA

Moves and stretches throughout the workday

Her goal Maintain her weight. Montiel knows it's not an easy feat when you're locked into a desk job.

How she does it She now strolls around the office several times a day, stands while on the phone and even does 5 to 10 lunges during calls twice a week. She's cut sitting time from eight hours a day to six. Montiel bikes or walks to work, and her home habits have also changed. "If I put on the TV, I'll think, What a good time to clean," she says.



Make it work for you. Montiel is naturally restless and doesn't need reminders to move. If you do, set prompts on your calendar, or download software from DeskActive.com (\$35 per year), which sends cues and a hard-to-ignore virtual trainer to your screen to guide you through stretches.

Kelly Jensen

BLOGGER, 27, LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN

Built her own treadmill desk

Her goal A total health overhaul: Jensen hopes to shed 80 pounds.

How she does it Jensen used \$30 worth of wood to create a desk attachment for her treadmill and began walking at 1 to 3 mph for an hour or two a day as she worked. Six months later, after working out



more and eating better, she'd lost 40 pounds. (Go, Kelly!) Plus, she's happy and productive. "Walking sparks my creativity," Jensen says.

Make it work for you. One or two hours daily of walking at a slow pace is a great health target, says Michelle Segar, Ph.D., associate director of the SHARP Center for Women and Girls. Afraid you'll fall? "I got the hang of it easily. You go so slowly, it's hardly a workout," Jensen says. Learn to build a treadmill desk at Self.com/health.

Marissa Wald

DOCTORAL STUDENT, 31, TUCSON, ARIZONA

Uses a standing desk most of the day

Her goal Ease backaches brought on by being tied to her screen.

Wald tried an exercise ball, but her desk chair was too tough to resist.

How she does it She ditched her desk and chair and placed the computer on a tall table her husband found on Craigslist for about \$75. "Now instead of sitting for 10 hours, I stand for 7 and rest on a stool when I get tired," Wald says. "And it's so great. I don't



have much back pain." That's even after Wald became pregnant.

Make it work for you. Moms-to-be should get a doctor's green light to stand, Dr. Levine says. "But being active is important for the baby's health, too." Wald suggests adding a soundtrack: "Dancing and swaying make for a fun work environment."

Marianne Hales Harding

ONLINE COLLEGE FACULTY, 38, ST. GEORGE, UTAH

Works on a stationary bike

Her goal Stay energetic without scarfing junk food for a sugar rush. Hales Harding is a single mom with multiple sclerosis who works after her children go to bed.

How she does it Hales Harding uses FitDesk (\$229), a stationary bike with a work surface in place



of handlebars, to cycle slowly for 30 minutes to an hour most nights while she works, so instead of sitting still, she's getting active. "It's much more effective than Oreos for energy!" she says. "I love cycling and ride for MS every June."

Make it work for you. "If a person with MS can do it, then we have no excuse," Dr. Levine says. If your cop-out is a painful seat, seek out a wide, padded model, Hales Harding suggests. "It's more like a comfortable chair." Pedal power!