

introducing: **Move More at Work** e-learning



Summary

A short (25 minute) and engaging accredited e-learning module designed to provide users with:

- information on the ill-health effects of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour, and in particular prolonged periods of sitting whilst at work
- practical advice on how to reduce these risks

Key Benefits:

- addresses major risk to health
- directly supports workplace health, safety and wellbeing strategies
- complements any existing e-learning packages (e.g. general health, safety and wellbeing, DSE use, etc.)
- ensures compliance with UK law (specifically the requirements to provide information on and reduce risks to health while at work)
- available on multiple platforms including PC and tablet
- successful completion awarded with certificate and downloadable content (stretching exercises and 'simple ways to move' reminder)

- flexible completion reporting
- available as embedded or hosted package
- content can be tailored to your organisation

Physical Activity - An Introduction

Insufficient physical activity (IPA) is a worldwide problem which can lead to significant health issues including high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, and depression. IPA has been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality.

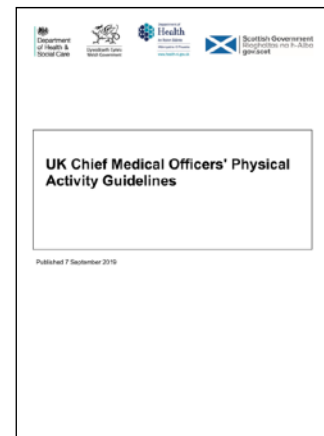
IPA is partly attributable to:

- inadequate levels of activity during leisure time; *and*
- **an increase in sedentary behaviour** (sitting or lying down while awake) during occupational and domestic activities.

Member states including the U.K. have adopted WHO guidelines on physical activity for different age groups. U.K. Chief Medical Officers issued their revised Physical Activity Guidelines in September 2019.

Promoted via numerous public health organisations including the NHS, broadly speaking this advocates:

- regular moderate and/or vigorous aerobic activity, and strength exercises; and
- reducing sedentary behaviour, both at work and during leisure time



Sedentary Behaviour at Work

While the link between IPA and ill-health is long established, an increasing number of studies in more recent years have highlighted the dangers of sedentary behaviour - sitting or lying down for long periods while awake. Some commentators have even described prolonged sitting as the 'new cancer' or the 'new smoking'.

Clearly, sedentary behaviour happens in a variety of settings - during leisure time, while commuting and in the workplace. But our increasing reliance on technology in the workplace - predominantly used at a desk - can condition users to sit for long periods and over time this can contribute to a serious negative impact on general health. As the workplace itself has evolved, staff are more likely to be working remotely away from the office. For some, reduced direct supervision and fewer face-to-face interactions with colleagues can lead to increased sitting times.

Guidance on Sitting at Work

The DSE Regulations and Guidance

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 (the DSE Regulations) aim to reduce the health risks associated with computer use at work.

The DSE Regulations and the accompanying Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance would therefore seem a natural place for information and guidance on reducing health risks associated with sedentary activities. However, research on (and awareness of) the health risks linked to prolonged sitting has developed significantly since the last significant update to the Regulations and Guidance in 2002. As such, the focus of both the legislation and Guidance remains on minimising the following health risks:

- musculoskeletal disorders
- visual fatigue
- mental stress and anxiety



Regulation 4 of the DSE Regulations does require employers to plan the work activities of their DSE users, and this enables postural variations as their computer tasks are broken up by other types of work. HSE Guidance suggests short, frequent interruptions (e.g. 5-10 minutes per hour of computer use) are preferable to longer, more infrequent interruptions. While a welcome consequence of this provision may be that computer users move more often, by themselves the Regulations do not provide sufficient information or guidance on the importance of activity and movement for staff with sedentary jobs. And in 2019, many staff have few or no alternatives to their computer work.

Expert Statement

In the absence of any 'official' guidance on sedentary working, an Expert Statement commissioned by Public Health England and The Active Working Community Interest Company was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine in June 2015.

To reduce sitting time, one of the recommendations within the report proposes that staff in desk-based roles should aim for at least 2 hours of standing or light activity during working hours, building up to 4 hours. Adjustable sit/stand desks or workstations are recommended as a method of facilitating this.

No doubt mindful of the impact of such a dramatic change in working practice - not to mention potential costs associated with procuring sit/stand furniture - business groups such as the CBI gave the Expert Statement a lukewarm response.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - UK

The HSE have identified musculoskeletal disorders as one of their three health priorities (alongside work-related stress and occupational lung disease). Their Strategy Plan for tackling this issue, finalised in autumn 2017, contained a commitment to update their guidance on the use of screen-based equipment **and the relevant impacts of sedentary working**.

Official HSE policy is informed by their independent Workplace Health Expert Committee (WHEC) which provides advice on emerging issues in workplace health. WHEC published their position paper Sedentary Work and Health in January 2019.

In summary, while this report acknowledges the risks to health of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour, it also recognises the difficulties in properly assessing the risks from sitting at work in particular (against sedentary behaviour generally) given the available research to date. The paper does not make any clear policy recommendations and calls for further research and study.

World Health Organization (WHO)

Published in June 2018 and developed following worldwide consultation, WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 seeks to promote physical activity by providing updated guidance and a framework of effective and feasible policy actions to increase physical activity at all levels. The Plan states¹:

*“Industry, Guilds, Labour, Unions, Occupational Health and Safety and other related organizations should develop and implement guidance to support employers create healthy workplaces that support physical activity **and reduced extended periods of sedentary behaviour during the working day**, and encourage active lifestyles of their employees and families.”*

Our Position

We recognise that UK employers are faced with confusing and often contradictory information on what - if anything - they should do about prolonged sitting at work. On the one hand, sources such as the Expert Statement advocate a radical transformation in working practices, while on the other there remains no clear policy guidance from the HSE. This is against a background of more direct calls to action from international organisations such as the WHO. We take an (admittedly) simplistic approach - on a basic level, physical inactivity and excessive sedentary behaviour can lead to serious ill-health and even early mortality. Our aim should be to address these wherever they occur, both at and out-with the workplace.



For good health we should all try to:

- meet minimum WHO guidelines for physical activity; and
- reduce our sedentary behaviour.

Where staff regularly sit for prolonged periods at work, employers have a moral obligation to encourage movement and postural changes to help safeguard general health. This is in addition to legal duties under the DSE Regulations to plan work activities so that DSE work is interrupted.

Staff have legal rights to receive information about risks to health at work, and relevant control measures.

Interventions for encouraging movement and standing in the workplace can:

- be simple, free or inexpensive
- have a positive impact on productivity, engagement, health and wellbeing
- lead to lifestyle changes outside of work

Move More at Work e-learning

This concise e-learning course has been developed to provide users with clear information about the serious health risks associated with inactivity generally, and in particular prolonged sitting while at work. Learners are given examples of different ways of introducing more activity and movement in the workplace, and asked to consider which methods might work best for them personally.

A deliberately irreverent visual approach has been adopted to provide a contrast with the text/spoken information (which by its nature can be sobering), and to help hold the user's attention throughout the course.

While sit/stand furniture is acknowledged as an effective way of encouraging movement and postural changes, a key objective of the course is to highlight other free and low-cost methods of reducing prolonged periods of sitting.

Accreditation

Chartered Institute of Ergonomics & Human Factors



In July 2018, Move More at Work became the first ever e-learning training course to be accredited by the prestigious Chartered Institute of Ergonomics & Human Factors (CIEHF). The founding ergonomics membership body in the world, the UK-based CIEHF continue to lead internationally in registration, professional standards and accreditation activities for the discipline.

In approving the Move More at Work course, assessors from the Professional Affairs Board of the CIEHF commented:

“An excellent and comprehensive e-learning course developed by an experienced team. The material is visually engaging with practical ideas/examples given for the workplace which are importantly guided by relevant Regulations. The style of learning and access to online materials will suit the work environment. The developers should be congratulated on designing an accessible vocational course on an increasingly important topic.”



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Continuing Professional Development (CPD)



Successful completion of Move More at Work attracts one CPD credit.

Collaborators

The Move More at Work course has been developed in association with DSE Scotland Limited.



DSE Scotland

Desk Assessments and DSE Assessor Training

More Information

visit: www.echo-3.co.uk/online-course/move-more-at-work/

www.movemoreatwork.com

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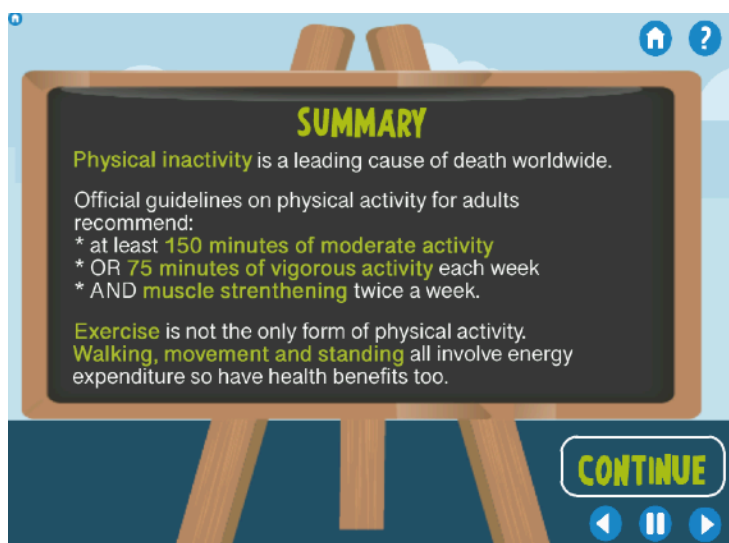
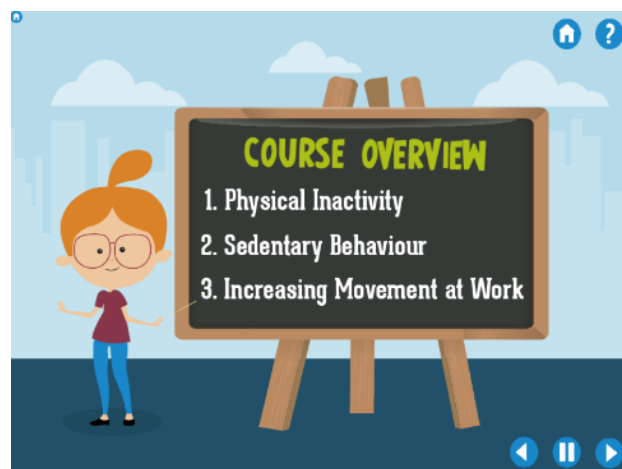


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ACCREDITED SHORT COURSE



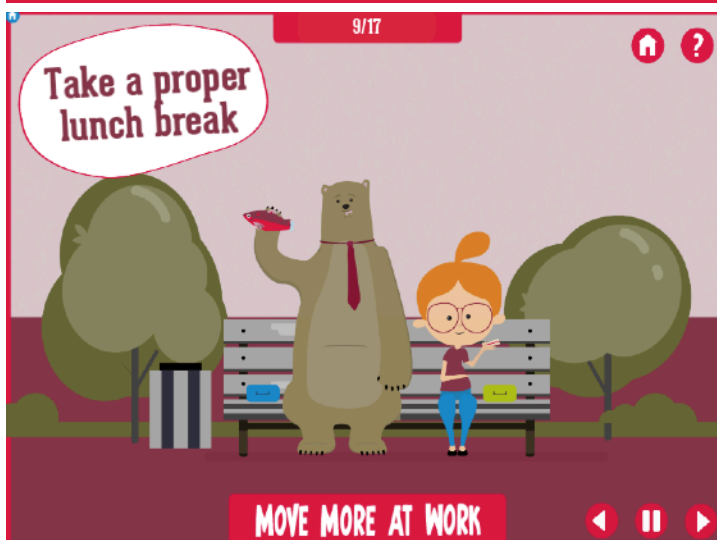
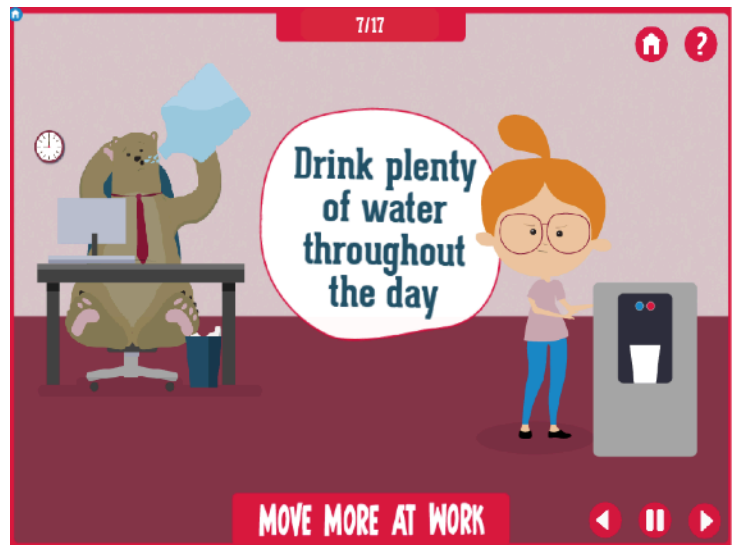


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ACCREDITED SHORT COURSE ☒



MOVE MORE AT WORK

STRETCHING EXERCISES

You can do these simple stretches at or near your desk.
Please consult your GP, physiotherapist or other health professional first
if you have concerns about the suitability of any of the stretches for you.

THE SQUEEZE

When seated, squeeze the buttocks together, hold for 5 seconds and release.

Repeat 5 times.

