

# NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

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## SIT-STAND WORKSTATIONS: PROS AND CONS



Sit-stand workstations have grown in popularity in recent years. But are they necessarily the better choice? Here are some of the pros and cons of these alternative workstations.

### The Advantages of Standing

In comparison to sitting for long periods of time, standing:

- Burns 20% more calories
- Reduces strain on the lower back
- Increases muscle activity
- May combat a sedentary lifestyle

### Disadvantages of Standing

- Standing makes it more difficult to perform fine motor tasks, such as computer work
- A standing workstation can cause users to place pressure on wrists; increasing risk of injury
- Standing increases cartilage pressure in the knees, hips and balls of the feet
- Standing requires 20% more energy than sitting and places a greater strain on the circulatory system
- Standing workstations can decrease privacy due to being a different height than colleagues
- Poor standing posture can lead to locking knees, weaker abdominal muscles (which causes people to sway back), or standing on one leg to obtain relief

### Are Sit-Stand Workstation Effective?

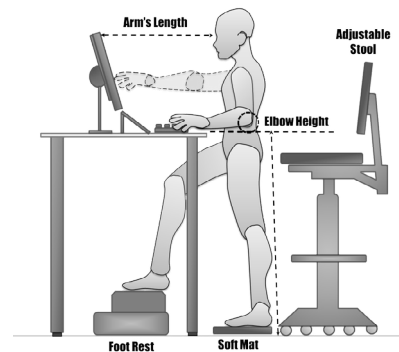
Field studies completed by UCLA's Health Injury Prevention Program have concluded that there is little evidence of widespread benefits from sit-stand workstations. The studies found that most users stand for very short periods of time (15 minutes or less *total per day*). Other studies have found that the use of sit-stand workstations rapidly declines over time—*after just one month, the majority of people return to sitting the entire day.*

### Standing Workstation Ergonomics

If you have a standing workstation, follow these tips:

- Make sure the table height is at the same height as your elbow when standing
- Stand on an anti-fatigue mat

- Wear supportive shoes and replace them often
- Adjust the keyboard, mouse and monitor heights appropriately for both sitting and standing
- Alternate postures (use a timer if needed)
- Sit for one hour, stand for five minutes



### Best Option

The best option for those who face long hours of sedentary work is to use a combination of sitting and standing. If you have a sitting-only workspace, be sure to get up, stand and/or move for **at least five minutes of each hour**. If you have a sit-stand workstation, alternate your time spent sitting and standing while working. The body responds best to balance between static and dynamic activity.

Regardless of whether you are sitting or standing, it is important to always use proper posture and good body mechanics.

Source  
<https://www.uclahealth.org/safety/sitting-to-standing-workstations>  
<http://safetyervices.ucdavis.edu/article/sitting-standing-workstations>

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Keep a copy of this bulletin in your Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) binder and be sure employees receive a copy.