

Seated & sedentary

People are interesting. We have a will to survive yet we often practice self-destructive behavior. The more physically efficient we make the world around us, the more physically deficient we become. We strive to reduce stress in our lives only to find that we are less able to handle stress when it inevitably occurs. The human body was made to move and move vigorously, yet an increasing number of people become more sedentary each year. In order to be healthy, we need movement in our lives, but will we start in time?

In this column, I will address the foundational issue of the importance of being active. Increasing your activity from wherever you currently are will lead to an increase in performance and productivity and, perhaps more importantly, increase the duration and quality of your life.

Let me start with lack of activity. Many of us sit too much. I have heard some in the exercise world say that sitting is the root of all evil, and I can't really disagree. We sit to drive, watch television, play video games, use a computer and often while we work. As a professional trainer and strength and conditioning coach, I see every day the effects of large amounts of time in the seated position. From a postural standpoint, tight hip flexors and shoulders and necks that round forward are common effects of constant sitting. In addition, there is the weight problem that is often a product of this sedentary lifestyle.

Most would agree that being able to stand and move is critical to survival. It is the position we are best able to see, avoid, or react to danger. Another example is that a healthy young child will learn to rollover, raise the head, sit up, crawl, rise up again, squat up to a standing position, walk, walk fast, run, run fast, then try to run even faster! Even at this young age we are

programmed to move and move vigorously. To me, this sounds like a great start to a long and healthy life. After being cleared for each activity, I often tell my clients: Don't lie down when you can sit up, don't sit when you can stand, don't stand if you can walk, don't walk if you can run, and don't just run if you can run fast! This applies to many of the exercise modalities that I employ. The key is to find your limits and then sensibly challenge yourself and allow adequate time for recovery.

If it is important for you to improve your fitness level, do it NOW! If you have physical limits or limits with regards to knowledge, find the help you need and move through to your next level. Do something as soon as you are done reading this article. In his book *Core Performance*, Mark Verstegen states that $\text{Work} + \text{Rest} = \text{Success}$. The work comes first. Let your work begin now.

Steve Howard