

Sedentary lifestyle

This article is about the medical term. For the anthropologic concept, see *sedentism*.

“Couch potato” redirects here. For other uses, see *Couch potato* (disambiguation).

A **sedentary lifestyle** is a type of lifestyle with no or ir-



Increases in sedentary behaviors such as watching television are characteristic of a sedentary lifestyle

regular physical activity. A person who lives a sedentary lifestyle may colloquially be known as a **slob** or **couch potato**. It is commonly found in both the developed and developing world. Sedentary activities include sitting, reading, watching television, playing video games, and computer use for much of the day with little or no vigorous physical exercise. A sedentary lifestyle can contribute to many preventable causes of death. *Screen time* is the amount of time a person spends watching a screen such as a television, computer monitor, or mobile device. Excessive screen time is linked to negative health consequences.^{[1][2][3][4]}

1 Health effects

A lack of physical activity is one of the leading causes of preventable death worldwide.^[5]

Sitting still may cause premature death. The risk is higher among those that sit still more than 5 hours per day. It is shown to be a risk factor on its own independent of hard exercise and BMI. The more still, the higher risk of chronic diseases. People that sit still more than 4 hours



A sedentary person, or a “couch potato”

per day have a 40 percent higher risk than those that sit fewer than 4 hours per day. However, those that exercise at least 4 hours per week are as healthy as those that sit fewer than 4 hours per day.^{[6][7]}

A sedentary lifestyle and lack of physical activity can contribute to or be a risk factor for:

- Anxiety^{[8][9][10]}
- Cardiovascular disease^{[11][12]}
- Mortality in elderly men by 30% and double the risk in elderly women^[13]
- Deep vein thrombosis
- Depression^{[8][10]}
- Diabetes^[8]
- Colon cancer^[8]
- High blood pressure^{[8][14]}
- Obesity^{[15][16]}
- Osteoporosis^{[8][17][18]}
- Lipid disorders^[8]
- Kidney stones
- Corporal Syndrome
- Frequent Back and neck pain or pinched nerve
- Spinal disc herniation (Low back pain)^[19]

2 Solutions

One response that has been adopted by many organizations concerned with health and environment is the promotion of **active travel**, which seeks to promote walking and cycling as safe and attractive alternatives to motorized transport.^[20]

Implementing **wellness** programs is becoming another popular trend among organizations. Wellness programs can be unique to each organization and can focus on a variety of objectives. For example, some organizations try to get their employees moving through exercise classes at lunch, or walking challenges among co-workers. Other organizations offer a number of different screenings for employees, such as cholesterol or blood pressure screenings.

It is essential that wellness programs have specific goals that provide a specific direction for the program.^[21] Goals can include tracking the number of participants who improved their fitness level, or the number of participants screened.

Incentives for increased activity may include doing activities that the person enjoys, such as walking with a friend or playing in a sports league.^[22]

3 History

The term *couch potato* was coined by a friend of underground comics artist Robert Armstrong in the 1970s; Armstrong featured a group of couch potatoes in a series of comics featuring sedentary characters and with Jack Mingo and Allan Dodge created a satirical organization that purported to watch television as a form of meditation. With two books and endless promotion through the 1980s, the Couch Potatoes appeared in hundreds of newspapers, magazines and broadcasts, spreading its “turn on, tune in, veg out” message, garnering 7,000 members, and popularizing the term.

The condition, which predates the term, is characterized by **sitting** or remaining inactive for most of the day with little or no exercise.

Lack of exercise causes **muscle atrophy**, i.e. shrinking and weakening of the muscles and accordingly increases susceptibility to physical injury. Additionally, **physical fitness** is correlated with immune system function;^[23] a reduction in physical fitness is generally accompanied by a weakening of the immune system. A review in *Nature Reviews Cardiology* suggests that since illness or injury are associated with prolonged periods of enforced rest, such sedentariness has physiologically become linked to life-preserving metabolic and stress related responses such as **inflammation** that aid recovery during illness and injury but which due to being nonadaptive during health now lead to chronic diseases.^[24]

Despite the well-known benefits of physical activity, many adults and many children lead a relatively sedentary lifestyle^{[25][26]} and are not active enough to achieve these health benefits.

In the 2008 United States American National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) 36% of adults were considered inactive.^[27] 59% of adult respondents never participated in vigorous physical activity lasting more than 10 minutes per week.^[27]

4 See also

- 9 to 5
- **Active travel**
- Childhood inactivity and obesity in the United States
- Exercise trends
- Laziness
- Neurobiological effects of physical exercise
- Simple living
- Sloth (deadly sin)
- Workaholic

5 References

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6 External links

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