

How movement prevents disease



World Move for Health Day is a public awareness day that hopes to encourage an increase in physical activity to promote the prevention of chronic diseases. The four main types are cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease, which in parts of the world, have reached epidemic proportions.

Why you need to care about physical activity

The inventor of the treadmill desk, Dr James Levine of the Mayo Clinic has, for years, studied the ill-effects of a sedentary life. He says “sitting is more dangerous than smoking, kills more people than HIV, and is more treacherous than parachuting”. Numerous studies confirm his findings and show that low physical activity levels puts you at risk of some of the world’s deadliest diseases.

1. Cardiovascular disease.

The *American Journal of Epidemiology* says the strongest disease association linked with a sedentary lifestyle is cardiovascular disease. The less you move, the more at risk you are of suffering a fatal heart attack or stroke, but it’s entirely preventable. Doing 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week can strengthen your heart muscle, lower your cholesterol, and even reduce your blood pressure. Interval training, total-body sports like rowing and swimming, weight training, and core workouts are the best for your heart.

2. Diabetes.

According to a study by the University of Leicester, sitting causes enzymatic changes in our muscles and leads to increases in blood sugar. Maintain this for hours every day and you may develop type 2 diabetes.

Activities done on a regular basis and incorporated into your day like walking, swimming, dancing, lifting weights, and stretching can all help to lower your risk.

3. Cancer.

According to a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, your risk of colon, endometrial, and possibly even lung cancer increases when you’re inactive for long periods of time. It causes an increase in inflammatory chemicals in the body, which can alter certain hormones linked to tumour formation. All types of exercise that get your muscles working and blood pumping can help to balance your hormones and can lower your risk of at least 13 types of cancer.

4. Chronic respiratory disease.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a common, serious respiratory illness with a high mortality rate. In most cases, the combination of cigarette smoke and other inhaled toxins coupled with inactivity causes oxidative stress within the lung tissue, which damages it. Exercise lowers inflammation and oxidative stress and can be important for people already suffering from COPD as well as those trying to prevent it.

Make activity part of your life to protect you from some of the world’s deadliest diseases.