

FAST FACTS

Sedentary habits

Sitting is the new smoking

In the factsheet on baseline movement, we covered the importance of frequent movement throughout the day. Here we will highlight the cost of not moving your body frequently (or well).

There are short term, mid term and long term costs of infrequent movement.

If you were to have a day of low movement, you might notice:

- lowered mood and higher agitation
- sluggish digestion
- feeling tired and unmotivated

If you did this over several weeks:

- **Change in body composition** - your lack of force on joints and the lack of pumping of fluids can stagnate energy, slow metabolism, encourage fat to deposit in certain areas and you might lose muscle mass
- **Moodiness**. Generally people who have a low movement score are more likely to be irritable, anxious or generally intolerant. You might have less patience for the little things
- **Vitality score reduces**
- You might feel more **tired** more often and for longer periods. This is partly because precious oxygen that gets pumped around your body in your blood tends to pump through at a slower rate without that movement driving the pump. You might also not be breathing as effectively - especially if your posture isn't good

Long term cost of being sedentary (and it's not good):

- **Obesity**: Lack of physical activity can lead to weight gain because you burn fewer calories. Over time, this can lead to obesity, which in turn increases the risk of numerous health problems, from heart disease to diabetes.
- **Cardiovascular disease**: Sedentary behaviour is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.
- **Muscle atrophy and weakness**: Without regular activity, muscles can weaken and lose tone.
- **Bone density loss**: Weight-bearing exercises help maintain bone density. Without them, there's a risk of conditions like osteoporosis.
- **Reduced metabolic health**: Sedentariness is associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, as it can lead to unfavourable changes in blood sugar and insulin resistance.
- **Poor circulation**: Sitting for extended periods can reduce blood flow, increasing the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT).



- **Chronic pain**: A sedentary lifestyle can lead to neck, and other musculoskeletal pains due to poor posture and lack of muscle tone.
- **Digestive issues**: Physical inactivity can lead to constipation and other digestive issues.
- **Decreased lifespan**: Some studies suggest that a sedentary lifestyle can decrease overall lifespan and increase the risk of many chronic diseases.

Emotional Costs:

- **Depression and anxiety**: Physical activity is known to release endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Lack of activity can contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety.
- **Lowered self-esteem**: Weight gain and poor physical health can contribute to negative self-perception.
- **Reduced cognitive function**: Physical activity has been shown to stimulate brain regions involved in memory and cognitive function. A sedentary lifestyle can hinder cognitive performance over time.
- **Social isolation**: If sedentariness is tied to staying indoors and avoiding social interactions, it can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Reduced sleep quality**: Regular physical activity can promote better sleep patterns, so inactivity can lead to sleep disturbances.
- **Increased stress**: Exercise is a natural way to reduce stress, so without it, stress levels might remain elevated.
- **Reduced resilience**: Regular exercise can bolster emotional resilience, helping individuals bounce back from setbacks more efficiently.