



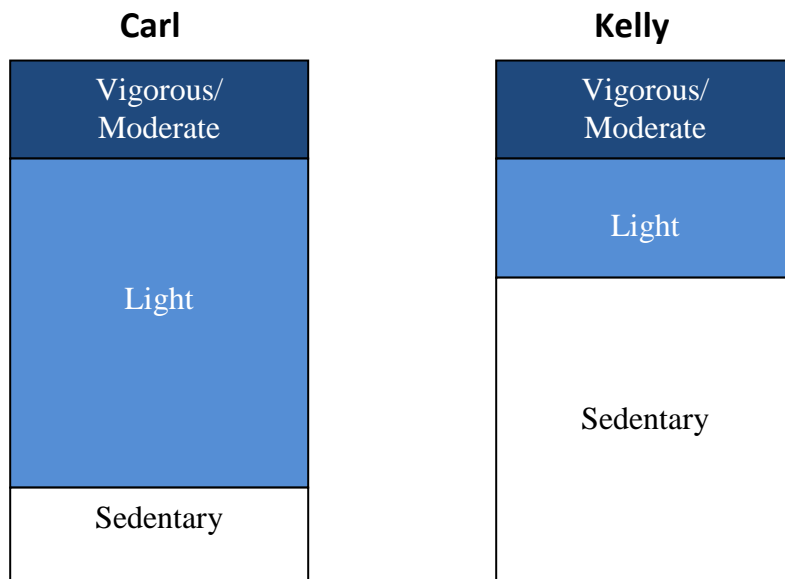
Session 19: Standing Up for Your Health

Throughout the GLB program, we have talked about the importance of reaching and maintaining your physical activity goal of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week. More recent studies have shown that your health is affected not only by how much moderate to vigorous physical activity you do, but also by how much time you spend at the other end of the activity scale, that of being inactive or not moving.

Sedentary activities are defined as those activities done most often in a sitting position (from sedere which is the Latin for “to sit”). Common examples include reading, watching television and using the computer.

In the past 10 years, scientific research has demonstrated that it is possible to be physically active and yet still spend too much time being sedentary. A term that has been used to describe this type of person is the “active couch potato”. Evidence from public health research is emerging to suggest that we need to maintain adequate levels of physical activity as well as to limit the amount of time spent in sedentary (sitting) activities in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

As an example of this, let’s take a look below at Kelly and Carl.



Kelly and Carl are married and joined a neighborhood gym together about 2 years ago. **In a typical week, they each participate in about 150-175 minutes of moderately intense physical activity.**

Kelly is a computer programmer and Carl is a school teacher. Neither do much moderate or vigorous intensity activity in their jobs. However:

- Kelly spends most of her work day sitting and then comes home and sits on the computer emailing friends.
- Carl rarely sits at school and is usually cooking, tinkering around the house, or walking their dog when he is home from work.

Carl has a lot of **LOW or LIGHT ACTIVITY**. Kelly has a lot of **NO or SEDENTARY ACTIVITY**.

In this case, Kelly can be described as the “active couch potato”.

Think about the amount of physical activity (moderate/vigorous) you typically participate in during an average week. Also think about the amount of time you usually spend sitting. Look below at the four activity/sitting categories. ***Which category best describes you??***

		Amount of Moderate or Vigorous Physical Activity	
		High	Low
Amount of Sitting in a Day	Low	<p>Doesn't sit much during the day and participates in regular physical activity</p> <p>Example- Cleans for a living and goes for a one hour walk daily</p>	<p>Doesn't sit much during the day but has little regular physical activity</p> <p>Example- Cleans for a living and spends evenings and weekends watching television</p>
	High	<p>Sits most of the day at work but has regular physical activity</p> <p>Example- Types for a living and goes for a one hour walk daily.</p>	<p>Sits most of the day at work and has little regular physical activity</p> <p>Example- Types for a living and spends evenings and weekends watching television</p>

Sitting More and Moving Less: How Did This Happen?

In session #4, we talked about examples in our own lives of tasks that can be performed now with much less movement than when compared to years ago. As we have become more and more “westernized”, many of us can accomplish the same tasks of daily living at home, work, and leisure using much less energy. Unless we make a conscious effort to change, less and less movement means more and more time in our day spent sitting.

So what are the health consequences of spending too much time sitting? Let’s take a look at some of the current research findings:

- Adults who watched an average of three or more hours of television per day had a higher BMI compared to those who watched less than three hours per day. (Fitzgerald, SJ; Kriska, AM; Pereira, MA; de Courten, MP. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*, 1997, 29(7): 910-915)
- Increased TV time was also found to be associated with increased risk of type 2 diabetes. (Hu et al. *JAMA*, 2003, 289(14):1785-91)
- In an Australian Study, more than 2 hours of television viewing per day was associated with an increased risk of death from cardiovascular and all other causes. (Dunstan et al, *Circulation*, 2010, 121: 384-391)
- Individuals who broke up their sitting time by getting up and moving around had healthier blood fat and blood glucose levels than those who did not. (Healy et al, *Diabetes Care*, 2008, 31(4): 661-66)

In session 4, we also talked about the differences between “spontaneous or unstructured activity” and “planned activity” and the importance of working on both. While planned activity includes the 150 minutes of moderately intense activity you aim to do each week, spontaneous or unstructured activity includes the active choices that you make each day that are hard to actually “count”.

Continue to maintain an “active head” and make a conscious effort to turn inactive moments into active moments when possible. Examples may include such things as taking the stairs rather than an elevator, getting off the bus at an earlier stop, or choosing a parking spot further away. Doing these spontaneous activities day in and day out can add up and will play a big role in reducing your sedentary time.

What's in Your Week?

Do you really know how much time you spend sitting? It may be that the answer is almost as important as knowing how active you are. As you know from previous lessons, there is no better way to determine the amount of sitting you typically do in a day than for you to keep track of it.

Try and complete at least one weekday and one weekend day on the log below, For each day you do keep track, write the word "SIT" in each of the 30-minute blocks in which most of your time was spent sitting. For a real challenge, you can use different colors to track job sitting (e.g. black) versus non-job sitting (e.g. red).

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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How Did You Do?

Number of sitting blocks in a day _____ ÷ 2 = _____number hours spent sitting that day.

(If you filled out your sitting blocks by job (black) versus non-job (red) sitting, look at these separately. It is the red leisure time sitting that you can try and decrease).

So How Much is Too Much Sitting Time?

Not enough is known in the research literature to set solid recommendations for a healthy limit on total hours of sitting throughout the day. However, since less sitting time has been associated with better health, it is safe to say that you would benefit if you reduced your current amount of sitting. There has been some suggestion that screen-based leisure-time sitting (e.g. TV or computer activities), should be limited to less than 2 hours per day. Additionally, blocks of sitting in excess of 2 hours may be harmful to the body and should be broken-up by periods of movement such as standing up and walking around.

If You Need to Decrease Your Sitting Time, What Can You Do?

On the Job: If your job is primarily in front of a computer screen, we might suggest that you think about ways you could break up your day. For example: if you are sitting all day, stand up and walk around periodically. Your body and mind will benefit from these short breaks. Stand up and stretch, walk upstairs, or walk across the hall to talk to a co-worker rather than sending an email or using the phone.

At Home: Unlike your job-related sedentary behavior, you have a great deal of control over how you spend your leisure time. Making changes to the ways you spend your leisure time can be a great way to reduce the amount of time you spend being sedentary.

There are many ways you can turn sedentary leisure time into active time. Here are some tips to help:

- Limit the television shows you watch to only a few favorites. It is easy to get hooked into a whole line-up of programs and waste the evening on shows you don't even enjoy. Or better yet, do your television watching at the gym while walking on the treadmill.
- Instead of meeting a friend over coffee to catch-up, ask the friend to join you for a walk to talk.

- Take your dog (or borrow a friend's dog) for a walk. It's a win-win situation for both you and Fido.
- Make plans to play with your kids, nieces/nephews, or grandkids. Run around with them, kick a soccer ball, or jump rope—it's a great way to spend quality time with them!

What Are Some Ways You Can Reduce Your Sedentary Leisure Time?

Indoor Activities

When the weather is just too hot, too cold, or too wet, it is easy to give up your activity for the day, stay inside and SIT. Instead, how about if you think about "moving" your activity plans indoors.

Bad weather can make outdoor activities much more difficult. However, don't use the weather as an excuse not to be active. Here are several approaches to keep you active when you can't go outside.

Experimenting with Indoor Activities

Consider some of the following:

- In many areas, schools and colleges open their indoor tracks and other facilities to the public. Other alternatives include malls, municipal centers, or gyms with indoor walking areas.
- Try other indoor activities such as bowling, swimming, dancing, zumba, or salsa.
- Malls attract walkers because they're temperature-controlled and have smooth floors, filtered air, security, bathrooms, and easy parking. Many malls can provide maps for you to give you an idea of distance covered.

On your own:

- Think about the activities that you currently do; is there something new that you would like to try?
- Identify local centers that have indoor tracks or places that you can walk or participate in an indoor activity.

Check out a Gym or Fitness Facility

Fitness centers and gyms have treadmills and some have tracks for indoor walking. These places usually offer televisions to watch or music to listen to while you walk. Many gyms and fitness facilities offer short-term (usually 1-week) trial memberships, often for free. Take advantage of these offers in order to try some their machines and equipment, as well as a variety of their classes.

On your own:

- Go to a fitness facility near you and sign up for a trial membership.
- Try out different machines. If you are interested in purchasing equipment for your home this is the perfect opportunity to see what you like and don't like.

Check-out DVDs/Cable TV

If you can't go outside, there are many different fitness DVDs, and cable shows that you can watch at home.

- Workout DVDs are available at your local public library or you can explore online sites like YouTube.
- Many cable companies have programs such as "Fitness On Demand" that you can use whenever convenient.
- Remember that these many of these items vary in intensity and ability so it is important that you choose one that matches your abilities.

On your own:

- Borrow a physical activity DVD from your public library or check out online or cable options.

A Sneak Peak at What's Ahead (The Next Session)



To do:

The Basics:

- Keep track of your weight.
 - Weigh yourself at home daily or at least once a week at the same time of day.
 - Record your weight in the Keeping Track book.
- Keep track of what you eat and drink using the Keeping Track book.
- Keep track of your physical activity in the Keeping Track book.
- Be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week.

Figure out how much time you spend Sitting and Try to Reduce It.

- Fill out the sitting grid on page 4. If you experience several unusual days (sickness, long flights, all-day seminars) do not count those days.
- Try breaking up your job-related sitting time with brief walks and stretches.
- Reduce your non-job related sitting time. Be creative!

Challenge Yourself:

- Complete one or more of the “on your own” challenges listed in the handout.

Additional Notes:
