

Exercising regularly WON'T offset the risk of sitting for long periods of time: An hour of activity a day isn't enough to stave off heart disease, diabetes and cancer, study finds

- **Regardless of whether you exercise regularly, sitting for long periods of time increases a person's risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer**
- **New study examines findings from 47 past pieces of research on subject**
- **Risk is 'more pronounced for those who do little or no exercise at all'**

By [Lizzie Parry for MailOnline](#)

Published: 09:22 GMT, 20 January 2015 | Updated: 01:01 GMT, 21 January 2015

A new study has concluded that even exercising regularly is not enough to offset the risk of sitting for long periods of time

Sitting for long periods of time, even if you are physically fit, puts you at greater risk of premature death.

Regardless of whether a person exercises regularly or not, sedentary periods increases the likelihood of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, scientists have concluded.

A new piece of research, distilling the conclusions of 47 past studies, has found a hour of exercise a day is not enough to offset the negative effects of sitting for the remaining 23 hours.

The researchers found the risk of poor health 'is more pronounced among those who do little or no exercise than among those who exercise regularly'.

More than half the average person's waking life is spent sitting watching television, working at a computer, or commuting to and from work.

Study author Dr David Alter, of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute University Health Network, said exercising does not give people a 'right of passage' to remain inactive the majority of the day.

He said: 'Our study finds that despite the health-enhancing benefits of physical activity, this alone may not be enough to reduce the risk for disease.'

Lead author Dr Avi Biswas, added: 'The findings suggest that the health risk of sitting too much is less pronounced when physical activity is increased.'

'We need further research to better understand how much physical activity is needed to offset the health risks associated with long sedentary time and optimise our health.'

Further studies are needed to help determine what interventions, in addition to exercise, are effective against the health risk of sitting for long periods of time.

'Avoiding sedentary time and getting regular exercise are both important for improving your health and survival,' Dr Alter said.

'It is not good enough to exercise for 30 minutes a day and be sedentary for 23-and-a-half hours.'

People who are sedentary for long periods of time are at greater risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes

and cancer, increasing the likelihood they were die early (file picture)

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE SITTING TIME?

Dr Alter said the first step to reducing the time you are sedentary each day is to monitor sitting times.

Make a note of all the time in a day you spending sitting down, watching TV, working or commuting.

Set achievable goals, aim to stand up or move for one to three minutes every half an hour.

When watching television, stand up during adverts or try and exercise in the breaks.

Dr Alter said more research is needed to establish more precise advice.

In the meantime, until further studies can offer more advice, Dr Alter offered tips on how to reduce sitting time.

The said the aim must be to decrease sedentary time by two to three hours in a 12-hour day.

'The first step is to monitor sitting times - once we start counting, we're more likely to change behaviour,' Dr Alter said.

'Next is setting achievable goals and finding opportunities to incorporate greater physical activity - and less sitting time - into your daily life.

'For example, at work, stand up or move for one to three minutes every half an hour, and when watching television, stand or exercise during commercials.'

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