



## Standing Desks

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Sitting is the new smoking. It's a phrase we've heard a lot lately but Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary, Nishan Sharma, really likes the analogy. He and his research team are looking into standing desks as an option for those in the workplace looking to break up their day.

Sharma says prolonged sitting, where one doesn't engage the big muscle groups for a 2 to 3 hour period, increases the risk of serious chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. One of the best ways to combat this sedentary time is to stand at a desk. Sharma and his team tried a pilot project where people were first given boxes to prop up their computers, then they were given standing desks. Sharma says no one wanted to go back to their sitting desks and everyone reported more energy through the day as well as more alertness particularly around that lull period of the day at 2 in the afternoon.

This positive feedback has encouraged Sharma and his team to do another study on standing desks that will start this summer. This study will measure the cognitive effects of using a standing desk as well as the physiological effects.

Sharma says to be clear, people cannot stand all day long either... that there's a balance to strike. But Sharma has found in his preliminary research that everyone likes the *option* of being able to stand at their desk. And there are many standing desks to try out. From the simple boxes, to standing desks that can accommodate a treadmill underneath, Sharma hopes standing desks are a standard feature in the office of the future.

For more information on how important it is to break up your sedentary behaviour and how best to do that [visit this website](#).

## Health Blog

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### Leah Sarich

Leah Sarich is a Co-Host on Breakfast Television and City Calgary's Health Specialist. She has been reporting on health issues since 2003.

Leah is a jack of all trades. You'll catch her filling in regularly for weather and the news anchor on BT.