

Why Movement is Life

Your sedentary work habits may be killing you.

Several years ago, as the news media started clamoring over ‘sedentary time’ in the workplace, there was a surge in data about what happened to people who worked at desks and workstations.

Two data points that I noticed. One was from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which cited a sharp rise in the number of workplace-related injuries in 2016, where musculoskeletal disorders accounted for up to 33% of all worker compensation cases in the US. The following data point is cumulative from two sources. One was reported in Spine Review (April 5, 2019) on the total number of spinal fusions performed in 2018: 1.62 million. Compare this with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) data: 488,300 fusions performed in 2011 and 287,600 in 2001.

How did we get to 1.62 million fusions in 2018? Researchers are still matching data and drawing correlations between workplace conditions and wellness, but who needs to point out something as obvious as this?

If we need spinal surgery, then there are better, healthier solutions like artificial disc replacement. But the fact remains: the human body does not function well when static. We need physical activity to stay healthy. With physical exercise, we can keep our blood pressure low, reduce our resting heart rate, and

reduce body fat accumulation. Physical activity also helps maintain muscular strength, which points to flexibility and maintaining good spine health. Stop movement, cease healthier habits, and you end up with unstable spines that lead to accelerated degenerative disc disease and eventual surgery.

Who knew being productive at the office was bad for your health? Movement, as it turns out, really is all about prolonging life.

We learn that lesson as children and carry it through our late teens. We're encouraged to move. It's an obligatory part of growing up; there's movement every hour at school or at play. Then, suddenly, we enter the workforce, and we stop moving. Here's more data I found:

- Time dedicated to sedentary activities (leisure and work) increased from 26 hours per week in 1965 to 38 hours per week in 2009.
- 53% of adults aged 18 to 74 (59% of men and 48% of women) spend about 3 hours or more per day (working days and holidays) in front of a screen (television or computer) outside of working hours.
- The general decline of physically active professions correlates with the 20% rise in sedentary occupations (office desk, workstation) between 1960 and 2008.

It's this kind of data that gives profound meaning to the words "Movement is Life." Other healthcare practitioners and I are pleased that researchers are finally putting real numbers and clinical data into what many have suspected for years. Sedentary behavior is literally killing people.

As a neurosurgeon specializing in the treatment of spinal disorders for nearly 30 years, I have had an opportunity to do more than catalog patient conditions and their procedures. On the first meeting with patients, I investigate every detail I can about their health and what may have led to their current pathology. Although I also treat many professional athletes, most of my patients have spinal disorders (disc herniations) that are the direct result of sedentary workplace habits.

What can we do to reverse this unhealthy trend? Some suggest that the latest ergonomic furniture and equipment best serve America's workplace. Yet, we will only move the needle toward better spine health if we engage people to get out of their offices and MOVE.

I advise my patients to find a balance between a productive office setting and one that will not damage them further. However, taking the long way to the office water cooler or delivering memos by hand is insufficient. To be physically engaged means that you must have a plan. And any meaningful program starts with the first step.

As a first step, I recommend that you begin by establishing a new office habit: for every hour you sit in your office chair, give yourself three minutes of stretching or exercise. I laid out [8 Spine-Health Stretches and Exercises](#) in a previous blog. Pick one or two from this list and stick with the program until it feels automatic. Initially, shoot for six minutes of exercise and work your way up to 12 minutes or more. Then, take the program home with you, double whatever you do in the office, and top it off with a brisk walk around your neighborhood. Once you master that program, expand it.



SAMPLE BLOG POST
For Beverly Hills Neurosurgery/Dr Todd Lanman

If anyone still needs a bit more convincing, I have more data. In a wellness study on the importance of movement conducted between 2003 and 2011, non-sedentary people had a 25% lower mortality rate than sedentary co-participants.

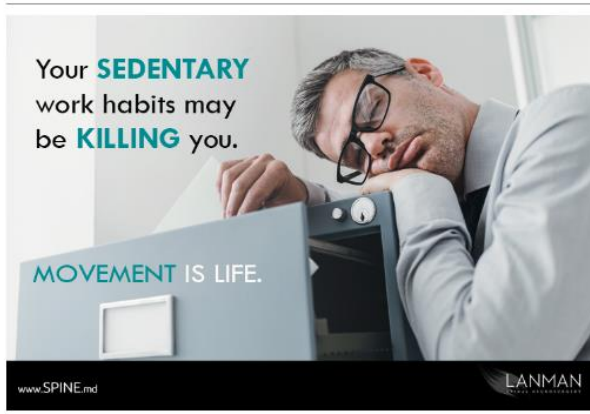
Movement is life? You'd better believe it.



Portfolio Sample

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WHY MOVEMENT IS LIFE

February 14, 2020

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Written by R Wyman

Task: Write a blog post about recovering from back surgery using doctor's notes; create an accompanying blog post image that follows the brand.

WC: 820

URL: <https://www.spine.md/insights/articles/why-movement-is-life/>

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