



NOTES

Don't Just Sit There

TRANSITIONING TO A STANDING AND DYNAMIC WORKSTATION FOR WHOLE-BODY HEALTH

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133 PAGES



KEY POINTS

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"My reason for writing this book is that, right now, you are probably motivated to sit less, and I'd like to help you transition appropriately. In order to do that, you need a deeper prescription for sitting less than simply "standing more." Therefore, I've included the following four sections in this book:

- *How to build a perfect workstation*
- *How to sit better*
- *How to stand better*
- *How to work out on company time"*

So you'd like to transition to a standing and DYNAMIC workstation for whole-body health? Nice work. It's a simple yet highly effective way of getting more movement into your day. And take note that this book is not simply about standing instead of sitting. It's all about moving more. It's about transitioning from a sitting/sedentary workstation to a standing/dynamic workstation. As Katy says in the quote below sitting isn't the issue NOT MOVING ALL DAY is the issue. So let's embark on a dynamic journey to move more throughout our working days.

This is the sixth note on Katy Bowmans books that I have done. Why so many Bowman books? Because they are awesome!

"As I explain more deeply in Move Your DNA: Restore Your Health Through Natural Movement, the sitting itself isn't really the problem; it is the repetitive use of a single position that makes us literally become ill in a litany of ways."

So lets move.

Ergonomics or Movement?

"MODERN ERGONOMICS IS not the scientific pursuit of what is best for the human body, but the scientific pursuit of how the human body can be positioned (in one position, for eight or more hours at a time) for the purpose of returning to work the next day, and then the next and the next and the next."

Have you ever had an ergonomics expert come and set up your workstation so that it is ergonomically friendly for your body, so you can sit in the 'right position' all day long? While there are definitely better and worse positions to sit, it's important to understand that the science of ergonomics is not

about human thriving; it's about making you as comfortable as possible so that you can come back to work the next day. However, movement is a biological imperative, many of our cellular functions require movement and a stationary position does not help with our cellular function. We have got to transition wisely into a dynamic workstation: a work set up that promotes more movement and encourages us into many different positions throughout the day.

"I've brought all this up because I want you to understand why I've chosen to write a book on why the sedentary desk—whether it be a sitting or a standing one—is the problem. If we keep trying to solve the "what's the best way to be in front of my computer" problem, we'll miss that the answer is "as little as possible"

Great, so you've got it eh? It's not about finding the perfect way to sit or stand, it's about realizing that being stationary and unmoving throughout the day IS the problem. We need to move so that our cells can carry out their functions so they can keep us healthy. Without movement our cells cannot function properly. So how can you get a little more movement into your day today? How about setting up a flow station?

Flow Station

"The key to finding health through the use of alternative workstations is to make sure your setups are as fluid as possible. The more time you spend at a "fixed" station – even a super fancy setup with a five-star rating—the closer you will be to exactly where you were when you were sitting all day"

We need workstations that are as fluid as possible. In the book Katy gives us a bunch of super subtle movements that we can do while standing, from calf stretching to mobilizing the foot. She also dedicates a chapter to 'bigger moves' than we can do through out the day: including the thoracic stretch and the pelvic slide. You are going to have to get the book for the specific details on these movements. But remember by constantly changing the position of your body you are introducing your body to new forces and loads instead of the same load all day (which comes from sitting in the same position.... all day)

"The combinations and permutations of a workstation are endless. Sometimes we get so fixated on "doing it the right way" that we forget "the right way" is "as many ways as you can"."

"As many ways as you can"! How many ways can you work today? Standing while calf stretching. Sitting on the floor while hamstring stretching. Kneeling with your computer on a box. Taking that phone call while walking, outside in the sun. All standing at the meeting while doing the pelvic slide. Walking to work instead of driving. Standing up every five minutes to unkink your femoral artery. Go on set a timer now. Your

blood flow and lymph flow will love you for it. There is no ONE BEST WAY or BEST POSITION to work in. The best position is AS MANY DIFFERENT POSITIONS AS YOU CAN. Are you sitting while you read this? STAND UP! Or even better go for a walk and listen to the audio version.

Mechanotransduction

“Cells in your body have parts within them that have the specific function of sensing your mechanical environment (i.e., how your cells are squished in response to the forces created through moving and positioning). In a process called mechanotransduction, the distortion in the shape of these cells is turned into chemical signals that create adaptations on the cellular and tissue levels.”

You are constantly shaping yourself through the loads you are placing on your cells. This is a really important idea to understand because your bone density and your blood flow and all functions of the body depend on an optimal mechanical environment. If your pelvis is thrust out in front of you and your femur is anteriorly tilted and not vertical (a very common way to stand) then not only are you compressing the discs in your lumbar spine but you are also not loading the head of your femur as much as you would be in optimal alignment. This means that your femur doesn't lay down very dense bone making osteoporosis and femur fracture a future risk. Alignment really matters. Are you well aligned?

“The way we adapt depends on how we—our cells, really—are deformed. But it's not only the deformation of the cell that signals a particular behavior; the frequency of cell-stimulation is just as if not more important than the load (cell-deforming squeeze or pull) itself.”

Sit Better (and Move More)

“Just like a 70-year-old woman who has worn high heels her entire life can no longer go barefoot lest she tear her shortened Achilles tendons, neither can most of us sit in a straight-backed chair for very long without soon experiencing discomfort. Our slouches feel natural to our unnaturally shaped bodies.”

Ekkkkkk! That's scary! Our bodies have become so accustomed to poor positions that the poor position feels easy and a new position with improved alignment feels uncomfortable. Our bodies are unnaturally shaped as they were not shaped by nature! Chairs, shoes and western culture have shaped our bodies, but that's a bigger conversation, so back to sitting!

“Let's begin our adjustments by finding a flat-seated chair (a kitchen chair is usually flat) or fill in your bucket seat with a rolled towel to create a horizontal level surface. Start by sitting close to the edge of the chair; this will help you roll your pelvis forward. By forward I mean that the top

ridge of your pelvis—commonly referred to as your hip bones—should move toward your knees, a shift that (conveniently) lifts the tail bone away from the chair”.

If we are going to be sitting in a chair we want to be sitting with our pelvis in neutral. Bucket seats mean that many of us have become accustomed to sitting in a tucked (or posteriorly tilted) pelvic position. In a neutral position the ASIS's (anterior superior iliac spines) and the pubic symphysis should sit on the same vertical frontal plane. Talk to your favorite anatomy geek to understand what that means or talk to your friendly Katy trained restorative exercise specialist. Any good movement specialist should be able to help and it's important that you get it right so if you are confused right now...then get some help from a movement nerd like me.

The Perfect Chair!

“I’m often asked for my recommendation for the best office chair, to which I have no good reply. What makes a chair good is the frequency with which you choose not to use it. Most of the problems with sitting are related to the perpetual stillness, not the position itself. That being said, many times people are looking for a chair that makes their _____ (fill in the blank) feel better. I suggest that you put your search efforts and spending dollars towards improving your musculoskeletal health.”

This is my favorite line in the whole book “*What makes a chair good is the frequency with which you choose not to use it*” HA HA! A good chair is one you only sit in for a couple of minutes before moving into a different position and then a new different position. Chairs are like casts when we sit in them for long periods of time. When you sit in a chair for hours on end it starts to set you calf and hamstring length. As well as the shape and position of every cell in your body. So do your body a favor and make sedentary sitting positions a thing of the past. Shape your cells into the shape they need to be in for optimal alignment by showing them a huge variety of new positions to slowly coax them into lengths and strengths that make optimal alignment easy.

Stand Better (and Move More)

“Musculoskeletal issues like knee and back pain that come from sitting can be mitigated by smart progression and changing how you stand—which is why alignment while standing at work is critical”

To understand the alignment points in detail please get the book but these are the points that Katy is referring to. 1. Feet forward. 2. Feet pelvis width. 3. Legs vertical. 4. Pelvis Neutral. 5. Ribs Down. 6. Knee pits neutral. 7. Knee-caps released. 8. Head ramped up. The book has really great pictures and exercises to help you understand these points. Get the book here ([Link](#))

Standing in poor alignment can lead to standing injuries, so make sure you

are standing correctly before you start standing a lot. A restorative exercise specialist can help you with this if you don't want to get the book. Check out Katy's website to find your local Restorative Exercise Specialist. They have all been trained by Katy and are experts at helping you to move in correct alignment. If you are in Christchurch, New Zealand your local specialist is me!

Standing can be tough if you haven't been standing much, so transition wisely into standing more by slowly increasing the lengths of time you stand and make sure you are in optimal alignment. If you start to get a sore back or neck or anything else chances are you alignment is not optimal or that your body needs time to adapt. Start by standing for 30 minutes followed by some sitting. You wouldn't run a marathon without a long period of training so don't stand for 8 hours with no training. Take a few months to get there. And remember to move while on you feet.

Take Your Shoes Off!

"Now that I've given you all the objective markers to ensure you're in a neutral position, hear this: There is no way to stand in neutral while wearing positive heeled shoes. Please note that the term "positive-heeled" shoes does not refer to a heel being "good," but rather any shoe with a heel raised higher off the ground than the toes."

This quote kind of blows my mind. There is no way to stand in neutral while wearing a heeled shoe! Are you wearing a heeled shoe right now? Today most shoes have heels. Traditional running shoes have heels. Men's dress shoes have heels. Unless you are in a minimal shoe or a very flat shoe then chances are you are wearing a heel and so THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN STAND IN A NEUTRAL POSITION. That means that your knees, hips, back and everything else are being loaded in an unnatural way.

Take your shoes off!

Checklist

- 1. Constantly monitor your alignment points (make a photocopy of page 97 and keep a low-profile copy taped to your monitor).*
- 2. Use a half foam roller or rolled towel to stretch lower legs through the day for improved lower leg circulation.*
- 3. Continuously shift your frame, using various, slightly different standing alignments to keep muscles active in a constantly changing way, also supporting the venous return system and minimizing tissue overload.*
- 4. Sit or change positions when your muscles feel fatigued.*
- 5. Take one-or two minute movement breaks (e.g., walking short distances throughout the office) every 30 minutes. Go see someone in the flesh instead of calling or instant messaging them. Note: These are different from three- to five-minute movement breaks specifically dedicated to corrective exercise.*

6. *Tale one-to two-minute eye breaks every 20 minutes*"

So there you have it. A really quick look at this awesome book. I highly recommend that you get it. You can purchase all of Katy's books through my website. So get on it and lets move more today, and tomorrow and then the next day 😊

About the Author of 'Don't Just Sit There'

Katy Bowman

Katy Bowman is a biomechanist and writer with a wonderful gift for making complex ideas simple and bringing movement information to life. She has an international reputation for teaching alignment and load-science and is renowned for teaching hundreds of thousands of people on the role movement plays in the body and in the world. She has an award winning podcast: Move Your DNA and her website www.nutritiousmovement.com is packed with the best kind of movement advice.

About the Author of this Move Note

Hazel Boot

Hazel has a degree in Exercise and Sports Science. She is also an Anatomy Trains Structural Integrator and a Restorative Exercise Specialist. She works with clients to improve movement and reduce pain. She loves reading and geeking out on movement books. She writes notes on the books she loves to help others learn faster.

Find out more at www.mindinmovement.co.nz

I hope you enjoyed the content of this note but please remember that it is not medical advice and should not be used as such.