

## EXECUTIVE VITALITY: IS SITTING TOO MUCH ROBBING YOU OF YOUR ENERGY?

You are probably sitting at your computer reading this. And before that, you were probably sitting at your desk working. Afterwards, you will sit at your desk and continue working. Then you will go sit in a meeting before you and some colleagues sit down for lunch. It will be a busy day before you can go home and sit down for dinner, then sit and watch Jeopardy . . . which you DVR'd.

Or something like that. If you do not know all the reasons that sitting a lot is bad for you, here are some required readings that enumerate the outcomes of constant sitting, from cancer to spinal problems, deep vein thrombosis, flabbiness, and foggy brain:

- “Is Sitting a Lethal Activity?” James Vlahos, *New York Times*, April 14, 2011
- “Sitting Is the Smoking of Our Generation,” Nilofer Merchant, *Harvard Business Review Blog*, January 14, 2013

You know you are not at your best when you are inactive, so I will not belabor the point. I just want to point out that, if you are presenting to the Board this afternoon, you will be more impressive if you are alert, fit, energetic, and engaged. Too much inactivity can lead to being inattentive, out of shape, lethargic, and seemingly uninvolved—hence, the connection between too much sitting and too little executive vitality.

### So what can you do? Here are eight tips:

1. Now that the 3-martini lunch has been left behind in the *Mad Men* era (thank goodness), what can you do with all that extra time and energy? You could eat your lunch in 20 minutes and take the rest of your lunch hour to walk with a colleague who also sits too much.
2. You could set your phone alarm to notify you every 50 minutes to get up and move for 10 minutes before you sit down to work again. You will be amazed by the way this improves composure and what it does for your ability to think clearly.
3. You could invite people to have walking meetings with you. Obviously, this would not work with a large group but it works with one-on-ones.
4. If you take a coffee break in the morning or afternoon to perk up, try walking right on by the coffee shop and see if the movement has the same effect as the caffeine and sugar (minus the financial and caloric effects).
5. We are just assuming that you avail yourself of your company (or neighborhood) gym before or (and?) after work. If not, try the buddy (spouse, partner) system to ratchet up compliance.

6. You could replace your comfy executive chair with something that requires using core muscles to remain sitting.
7. Try a standing desk. It worked for Victor Hugo. He did all right with it.
8. Why sit during any phone call unless you have to take copious and continuous notes? Just get up and walk around.

***What can you do to sit less and become even more energetic and productive? Who amongst your weekly one-on-ones would be an eager partner to turn those meetings into walking meetings?***