



COLORADO LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

“Sitting is the New Smoking:” **How to Reverse the Damage of Sitting All Day**

“For people who sit most of the day, their risk of heart attack is about the same as smoking.”
~ Dr. Martha Grogan, Cardiologist, Mayo Clinic

Of all of the health risks out there, simply sitting down doesn't seem very dangerous. Research shows, however, that an overly sedentary lifestyle leads to what the scientific community is calling “sitting disease.” Studies conducted by Vanderbilt University, Northwestern University, the American Cancer Society, the British Journal of Sports Medicine, and many others reveal that prolonged sitting not only counteracts exercise, but is contributing to diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, and depression. When we sit for long periods of time, our body suffers the following:

1. Internal organs compress, so the production of crucial hormones, peptides, and other chemicals in the body become compromised
2. The neck strains and the spine shifts into an unnatural and painful position
3. The discs in the spine become contracted, preventing the absorption of fresh blood and nutrients
4. The brain becomes foggy
5. Muscles get sore and atrophy
6. Circulation decreases to the legs
7. The risk of osteoporosis increases due to bone softening

When we are sitting for long periods of time, the body goes into a type of hibernation state that can be compared to being in a coma. It is life-threatening for the body to stay in such a state for many hours per day, not to mention the fact that it makes it very difficult for the foggy brain to access the information needed to practice law!

The following are ways to reduce the damage to your body and your mind that result from sitting for long periods of time. Start practicing them NOW:

1. Try parking farther away from your office
2. When working at your desk, get up and walk around or do stretching exercises at least once an hour
3. Try swapping out your chair for an exercise ball
4. Sit up straight in your chair, no slouching

5. When you are driving, sit up straight
6. Do stomach strengthening exercises to help your posture (sit-ups, yoga, Pilates, deep breathing)
7. Take the stairs instead of the elevator
8. When you are at home watching TV, get up and walk around during commercials
9. Try a standing work station or convert your standard desk so you can stand while you work, for at least part of your day. It is easier than you might think!

Incorporating these changes into your daily routine is surprisingly easy and you will be surprised at how much better you will feel! For more information on the dangers of prolonged sitting, click on the following links:

<http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/national/the-health-hazards-of-sitting/750/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/24/sitting-at-work-why-its-dangerous-alternatives_n_1695618.html

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005>

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