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## 2 **Lethal sitting**

3 original at

4 [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/17/magazine/mag-17sitting-t.html?\\_r=1&src=me&ref=general](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/17/magazine/mag-17sitting-t.html?_r=1&src=me&ref=general)

5 People don't need experts to tell them that sitting around too much could  
6 give them a sore back or a spare tire. The conventional wisdom, though,  
7 is that if you watch your diet and get aerobic exercise at least a few times  
8 a week, you'll effectively offset your sedentary time. Research, however,  
9 suggests that this advice makes scarcely more sense than the notion that  
10 you could counter your smoking habit by jogging.

11 Sitting itself probably isn't worse than any other type of daytime physical  
12 inactivity, like lying on the couch watching TV. But for most of us, when  
13 we're awake and not moving, we're sitting. Whenever we sit on a chair,  
14 the electrical activity in the muscles of our body drops. This leads to a  
15 cascade of harmful metabolic effects.

16 Recent research has examined how rapidly inactivity can cause harm.  
17 Researchers recruited 14 young, fit and thin volunteers and recorded a 40  
18 percent reduction in insulin's ability to uptake glucose in the subjects —  
19 after 24 hours of being sedentary.

20 Over a lifetime, the unhealthy effects of sitting add up. A study, which  
21 looked at nearly 9,000 people, found that for each additional hour of  
22 television a person sat and watched per day, the risk of dying rose by 11  
23 percent. Reportedly, age, sex, education, smoking, hypertension, waist  
24 circumference and body-mass index did not significantly modify the  
25 associations between television viewing and all-cause mortality.

26 Excessive sitting, it seems, is a lethal activity.

## Questions

- 1) Explain what 'conventional wisdom' (line 6) means.
- 2) According to the article, can people counter the negative effect of excessive sitting with diet or exercise (hint 'sedentary' in line 8 is just another word for 'sitting')?
- 3) According to the article, is sitting more dangerous than other forms of inactivity?
- 4) What happens, according to the article, in our bodies when we are sitting for too long?
- 5) According to the article, do the negative consequences of sitting combine over time or is it enough to insert an active break in between different instances of sitting to prevent damage to one's health?
- 6) What is, according to the article, the association between all cause mortality (i.e. mortality due to all sorts of causes) and sitting?
- 7) Do you think that you spend too much time sitting?

## Vocabulary

**lethal** (line 2 and elsewhere) – deadly, fatal

**offset** (line 8) – to counterbalance as an equivalent does; compensate for

**drop** (line 14) – sink, fall, decrease

**uptake** (line 18) – absorption, the rate at which a substance is taken into a system

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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