



SIT? STAND? FINDING THE THIRD WAY TO WORK

Sit? Stand? Finding the third way to work.

You had better sit down for this, or maybe that should be stand up, because the truth is, humans were not designed to sit at a desk all day.

Deep in our psyche, we are hard wired to move. And for the first few hundred thousand years that's exactly what we did – from hunting prey and running away from predators to labouring in fields. Life was a blur of movement.

SITTING COMFORTABLY?

If you are reading this seated at a desk, then blame the Industrial Revolution. It changed everything and ultimately brought us to this point, the age of high technology. In just a few hundred thousand years, we have moved from an action packed existence to a mainly sedentary life.

It's thanks to these huge leaps forward that we now spend much of our day seated. In fact, a survey of 50,000 people across 20 countries found that workers spend an average of between three and eight hours of every working day sitting down¹.

So what you might ask? The uncomfortable truth is that this desk-bound existence is not good for the modern office worker. Lethargy, lack of energy and a greater susceptibility to injury is just the start of it. However, there is a way to reverse this trend and its negative health effects, we need to build natural movement into the working day.



HERE'S THE BAD NEWS

With bodies that were made to move, it stands to reason that movement is essential to ongoing good health. In fact, being active plays a wide ranging role in the health of our mind, body and wellbeing. And we're not talking about exercise, a sedentary working life has negative health effects even if you eat well and hit the gym. A study that followed 17,000 Canadians aged 18 to 90 for 12 years had surprising results. It revealed that "daily time spent sitting was associated with an elevated risk of all-cause and cardiovascular disease mortality... independent of leisure time physical activity and body mass index (BMI)."²

The bad news doesn't end there. There's a wide range of health risks that have now been linked to regular and prolonged periods of sitting down – including eye strain and other visual symptoms³; high levels of triglycerides associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes⁴; obesity⁵; increased risk of insulin resistance⁶; cardiovascular disease⁷; and cancer⁸. Studies show that without regular movement throughout the day, that's to say standing and walking, the body's ability to break down artery-clogging fats in our blood drops off significantly⁹.

It's perhaps not surprising that the icing on the cake is that workers clearly do not like sitting for most of the day, with discomfort increasing as the working day progresses¹⁰. Meanwhile, employers should take note of the close association between increasing discomfort and decreasing productivity and future pain¹¹. Pain and injury, of course, lead to a downward spiral of reduced employee wellbeing, falling productivity, absence from work and the costs of medical treatment.

WE WON'T STAND FOR IT EITHER

Before you decide to throw away your office chair, the answer is not quite so simple as to stop sitting and to start standing. Research shows that spending your working day at a stand-up desk leads to a whole new set of health-related problems. From bodily fatigue, lower limb swelling and discomfort, to venous pooling and lower back pain, it's a grim list of hazards¹².

THE GOOD NEWS

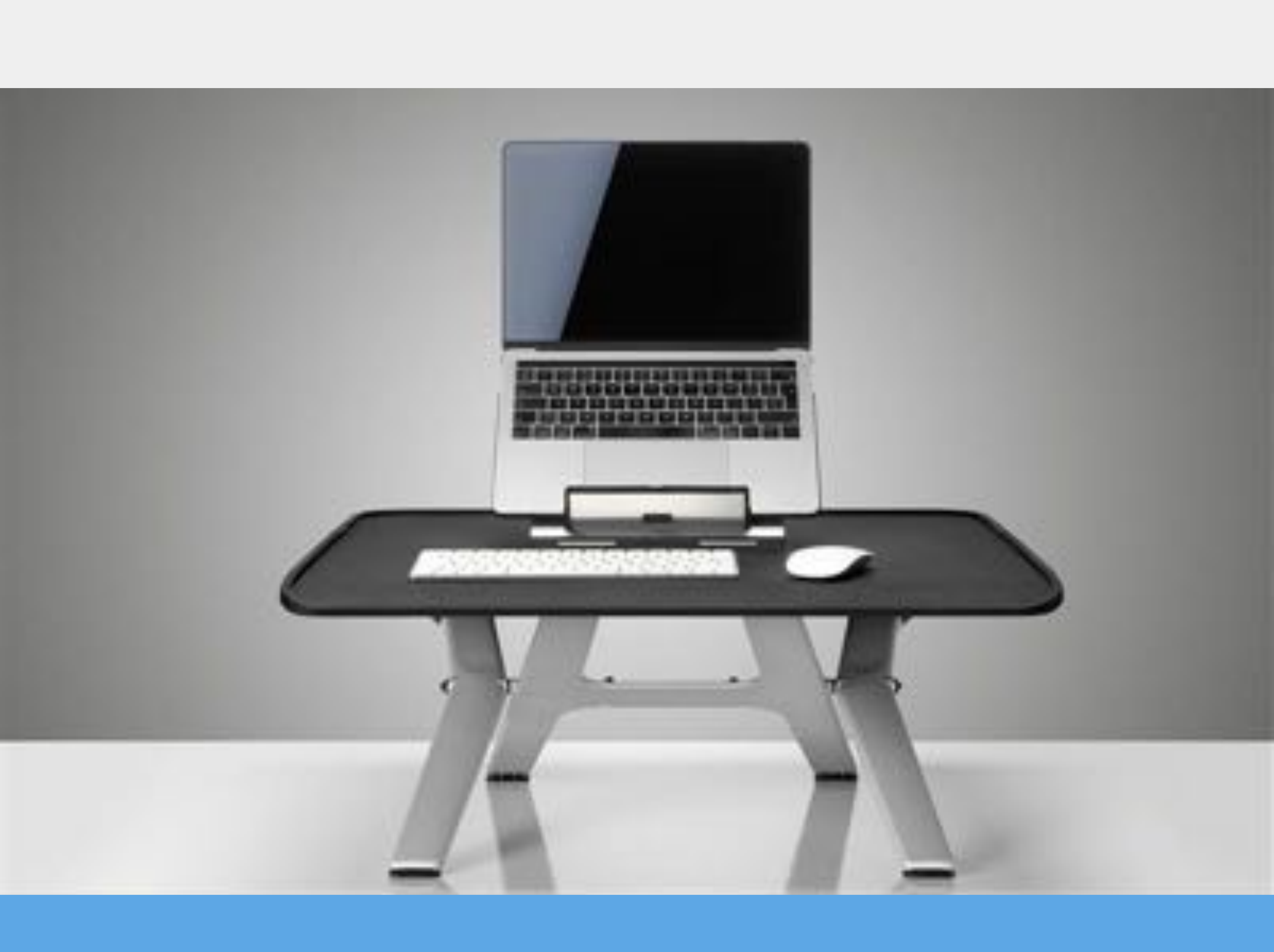
There is good news, however. Many studies show that a combination of sitting and standing up at work brings health benefits and reduces the ill effects of spending the day seated. There are links to an increase in good cholesterol (HDL)¹⁵; a decrease in the incidence of breathing difficulties¹⁷; less swelling of the lower limbs¹⁸; reduced lower back pain²⁰ and significantly less general discomfort²¹. The even better news is that sit-to-stand working shows little or no decrease in productivity when compared to seated office work²².

RISING TO THE OCCASION

Whether you're working from an office or working from home, the evidence is clear. People need to find a natural balance of sitting, standing and moving throughout their day to ensure a healthy body and mind. All we need is an office environment to suit.

At Colebrook Bosson and Saunders, we have been at the forefront of healthy workplace ergonomics for over 30 years. With human-centred design and innovative new products, we aim to always improve on what has come before, creating new solutions to a range of ergonomic challenges. And our latest innovation, Monto, is aimed squarely at getting us back on our feet.

Monto transforms a fixed desk into a height-adjustable workstation for standing and seated working, allowing users to reap the benefits of sit-to-stand working practices. With an easy-to-use, spring-assisted lift mechanism, Monto encourages users to change posture from sitting to standing throughout the working day. What's more, we've designed it to be easily retro-fitted to just about any fixed desk, allowing desk-bound workers everywhere to make their working day much healthier.



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