# Cardiologist warns sedentary lifestyle is akin to smoking



A prominent cardiologist has highlighted a prevalent lifestyle habit among many workers that he asserts is as detrimental to health as smoking. Dr. Stephen Williams’s remarks come as part of a wider discussion on the impact of a sedentary lifestyle, which he describes as the "new smoking lifestyle." He warns that prolonged periods of sitting can considerably affect physical health, with many office workers unwittingly contributing to this issue by spending extensive hours at their desks.

In an interview with the New York Post, Dr. Williams explained that many individuals might hold the misconception that they are maintaining an active lifestyle simply because they spend their workday on their feet. He stated, "When people come to the office and say that they have an active life because they are on their feet all day, I am not impressed. You may not be moving at a pace that fits the definition of 'physical activity'." His critique extends to those who use standing desks, emphasising that while they may increase calorie expenditure, they do not resolve the health risks associated with inactivity.

Dr. Williams associated sedentary behaviour with a variety of serious health outcomes, including heart disease, diabetes, weight gain, depression, and certain cancers. He stressed the importance of movement, asserting that physical activity contributes to weight management, lower blood pressure, improved cholesterol levels, stronger bones, and reduced inflammation.

Ben Greenfield, a notable biohacker and fitness expert, also echoed concerns regarding sedentary lifestyles, indicating that remaining inactive for periods exceeding 60 to 90 minutes is harmful, irrespective of whether one is seated or standing. He advised listeners on the Optimize Yourself podcast that elevating one's heart rate for just 10 to 15 minutes, totalling about 30 minutes of activity throughout the day, could yield significant health benefits.

Greenfield pointed out additional advantages of physical activity, such as enhanced brain function and relief from stress, anxiety, and depression. He noted, “If you have been totally sedentary, even a stroll is beneficial,” reinforcing the notion that any movement is better than none.

Experts recommend taking brief breaks from sitting every 30 minutes, encouraging individuals to stand up and move around to mitigate the adverse effects of prolonged inactivity. Monitoring heart rate during activities can also provide insights into exercise intensity, with a target range of 50-70% of one's maximum heart rate, calculated by subtracting age from 220.

In summary, health professionals are increasingly raising awareness of the potential dangers of a sedentary lifestyle, urging individuals to prioritise movement in their daily routines to support overall health and well-being.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.tyla.com/news/sedentary-lifestyle-impact-health-smoking-311084-20250408> - This article corroborates Dr. Stephen Williams's warning about sedentary lifestyles being as harmful as smoking and emphasizes the importance of physical activity to mitigate health risks.
* <https://www.tyla.com/news/sedentary-lifestyle-impact-health-smoking-311084-20250408> - It highlights that just standing at a desk does not constitute physical activity and that regular movement is necessary to avoid health issues like diabetes and heart disease.
* <https://www.archivemarkatresearch.com/news/article/sedentary-lifestyle-a-smoking-level-health-risk-9027> - This article supports the assertion that cardiologists equate sedentary lifestyles with smoking-level health risks, linking prolonged sitting to conditions such as obesity and heart disease.
* <https://www.watanserb.com/en/2025/02/13/inactivity-is-the-new-smoking-the-hidden-health-risks-of-a-sedentary-lifestyle/> - It reinforces the idea that sedentary lifestyles are extremely dangerous and comparable to the health risks associated with smoking.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8885891/> - This would typically be a source discussing the health impacts of physical inactivity, but without specific access to the URL, note that scientific journals like those indexed on PubMed often provide extensive research on the topic.