

Q&A WEBINAR: MOVE MORE, SIT LESS: WHY AND HOW?



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Jan has established an international reputation in the scientific field of promoting physical activity and public health. His research focuses on determinants of physical activity and sedentary behaviour across the lifespan, as well as developing and evaluating lifestyle interventions to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in different age groups and settings.

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MORE INFORMATION ON THE WEBSITES:

<https://www.kuleuven.be/english/kuleuven/>

Department of Movement Sciences

<https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737>

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R&D

R&D calls for greater support for the 50 leisure clubs – Renouveau & Démocratie

For any further information, you can get in touch with our colleagues at: OSP-RD@ec.europa.eu

N°	Question	Answer
1	Quand on cite les métiers à risque ou pénibles, on ne mentionne jamais les personnes dans l'administration.	Vous avez raison c'est une dimension que toutes les études dans le domaine demandent de prendre en compte.
2	That's why some institutions have a better budget and have installed special electric desk without no medical certificate/permit etc. At least we can by working avoid sitting all the time.	Yes, you are right and that is why we constantly request our administration to take into account the best practices of all other EU Institutions.
3	Physical activity is also (notably) GOOD for mental wellbeing. Any statistics?	<p>The mental health benefits of regular physical activity are indeed well documented. I can refer to a recent review study summarizing the role of physical activity on mental health and well-being. This review is available online via the website:</p> <p>https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9902068/pdf/cureus-0015-00000033475.pdf</p> <p>On average, regular physical activity (i.e., engaging in 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week) can reduce the risk of developing mental health issues like depression and anxiety by 20 - 30%.</p>
4	Speaking of environment/policy, we moved to a new open-space building in June, and I tried to advocate for standing desks for everyone. In the end, we have only 10% of electric standing desks. This is a huge, missed opportunity, especially given the contrast in the approach from the Commission. In the EP and the Council, all desks	You are right and that is why we constantly request our administration to take into account the best practices of all other EU Institutions and we'll address this specific request to DG HR and OIB

	<p>are electric, facilitating standing greatly. Maybe R&D wants to launch a campaign/petition to increase the number of standing desks in the Commission and make them the new normal?</p>	
5	<p>And in the EEAS also, the desks are electric :) Idem</p> <p>Thank you for your presentation! I wanted to ask: apart from a standing desk or going for a regular walk, are there any other good practices I can follow to stand up at least 30 minutes per day?</p>	<p>The World Health Organization emphasizes the importance of minimizing sedentary time and breaking up sitting periods as frequently as possible. According to the Physical Activity Pyramid by the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living (https://www.gezondleven.be/files/beweging/Healthy-Living-2017-Physical-Activity-Triangle.pdf), it's recommended to interrupt sitting every 30 minutes when feasible. A recent review study suggests that light-intensity walking provides greater health benefits compared to simply standing as an alternative to prolonged sitting (see https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9325803/pdf/40279_2022_Article_1649.pdf). Therefore, rather than focusing on the exact duration of (non-)sitting time, aim to replace sitting with light-intensity physical activities whenever possible. For instance, at work, you can take phone calls or online meetings while standing or walking, perform simple stretches such as shoulder rolls, neck stretches, or calf raises at your desk, or suggest walking meetings with colleagues instead of using a conference room.</p>
6	<p>Every day I sit on an inflatable ball for a few hours not to be too static.</p> <p>Let's vote for a gym in each building! ;)</p> <p>Many thanks indeed for this brilliant talk, very informative too. One question, though: when we concentrate on our work, we don't think about moving about. what can we do, please? (often, we need to solve something, so we don't want to be interrupted otherwise we lose our train</p>	<p>Prof Jan Seghers recommends associating specific office tasks with standing or engaging in light-intensity physical activities. By creating a link between a specific task and a particular behaviour, the task itself becomes a trigger for the desired action, which can eventually develop into a habit. This method, often referred to as "nudging," has been shown to be highly effective in encouraging behaviour change. For example, at work, you can make it a habit to take phone calls or online meetings while standing or walking. Over time, this behaviour will become automatic, i.e., your phone ringing will naturally prompt you to stand or walk without conscious effort.</p>

	<p>of thought and reasoning, and it is not efficient, so alarm system don't work).</p>	<p>Another powerful strategy for creating sustainable habits is the 'Tiny Habits' method, developed by BJ Fogg, founder and director of the 'Behavior Design Lab' at Stanford University. The Tiny Habits approach focuses on starting with small, easily achievable actions that grow into lasting habits through positive reinforcement and consistency. For example, when you receive a notification to join a meeting, you can immediately stand up and stretch; after returning from lunch, take a short walk around the office before sitting down to resume work. For more details about this method and practical tips, visit https://tinyhabits.com/. Key message: by pairing tasks with specific movements and starting small, you can create a healthier, more active routine that becomes a habit over time.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Invest 1 euro in sport, save 5 euro in healthcare. So, when are all trade unions together going to ask JSIS to reimburse the member fee of fitness and sports clubs?</p> <p>The complementary insurance CIGNA or Allianz (affiliated to EU scheme) reimburses the fees of fitness club.</p> <p>Even when there are activities in your building, when you are asking a question by sending an email to the trainers or trying to call them, as they are external, they do not care and do not answer to our request/questions.</p>	<p>For further information : Be Well activities & EC clubs</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>We have a lot of years' work to arrive on the level of the wellbeing at work such as in Asia...</p>	<p>from Asian workplaces, Prof Jan Seghers is aware that countries like Japan and China have well-established practices for incorporating physical activity into the workday. In Japan, it is common for employees to participate in 5 to 10 minutes of group-based stretching exercises to boost energy levels at the start of the day and during afternoon breaks. Similarly, in China, group calisthenics is widely practiced in both office and retail settings. Employees gather in open spaces before work to perform synchronized movements designed to enhance physical health, foster team spirit, and create a sense</p>

		<p>of community. These activities are often repeated later in the day to combat fatigue and maintain productivity.</p> <p>While these practices may not translate directly to the European context, you could consider implementing simple, low-threshold group activities in the workplace, such as a morning stretching session or similar initiatives. For instance, Prof Seghers knows that one company in Belgium introduced 'energy breaks' during the workday. These short sessions, led by fitness professionals on the office floor, required no specialized equipment or workout clothing, making them both accessible and convenient for employees.</p>
9	the commission has a gym as well in BERL, but is it reserved for the bodyguards and commissioners.... nobody else can go and use the installation	The Commission claims that it's a question of capacity. In any case, that's why it's so important to keep the facilities currently available for the rest of the staff.
10	All BeWell activities can be found on Where2Go:	https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/where2go/fit and in the Portfolio of Commission' sports and leisure Club's activities.
11	Many schools (Europeans schools) are equipped with sports facilities like gymnasiums, outdoor fields, swimming pools, and tennis courts. These facilities, often underused after school hours, could be made available to sport clubs to enhance local community sports participation.	HR F3 - European Schools, Agencies and External Organisations) is responsible for the access of leisure clubs to European School facilities, for example the Eurovolley club at EEBII, and we regularly invite them to our COPAS (Social Action Committee) meetings to follow up these issues with them. But of course, there could be much more collaboration, as you suggest, and we are looking at this closely not only with the clubs but also with the administration.
12	Alarming research: Average children in the 90s had better fitness than today's young athletes. https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/veda-skoly-alarmujici-	See above

	<p>vyzkum-bezne-deti-v-90-letech-mely-lepsi-fyzicku-nez-dnesni-mladi-sportovci-40484985</p> <p>Is it possible to make access to these smart office desks, easier for employees in the EC? When trying to request one, they are required to provide a large amount of paperwork from the doctor.</p>	
13	<p>Do you have any information about how to access the sports studio in the council building?</p>	<p>The Council has its own sports centre, which is open to officials from other Institutions if there are places available.</p>