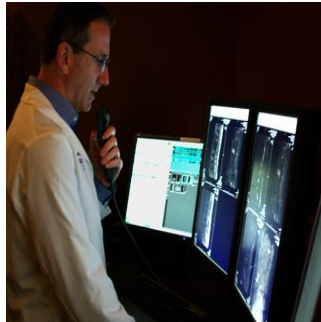

Radiologists Benefit From Standing Workstations



According to a report in the *American Journal of Roentgenology*, radiologists can improve their health by increasing their physical activity during their work shifts. This can be facilitated by installing standing workstations and exercise equipment in their reading rooms.

Sedentary Shifts

Since radiology is more or less a sedentary profession, and because there is sufficient evidence to prove that too much sitting can increase a person's risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, it is indeed advisable for radiologists to change their work habits.

According to Dr. Michael Richardson from the University of Washington, this can be achieved by implementing a few technological and behavioural measures. "Radiologists spend a lot of time sitting in the dark. We joke about our tailbones getting sclerotic because we sit all day. But it's not hard to start paying attention to your activity and making some changes to increase it."

Step By Step

It is advisable for radiologists to monitor their physical activity with a digital pedometer or a phone app which prompts them for activity breaks. This could help them break out of a sitting rut. Other ways of measuring physical activity includes measuring calories used or the number of steps walked. It is generally recommended that an individual should walk 10,000 steps or about five miles daily.

Dr. Richardson cited a 2008 study in which researchers provided pedometers to 131 internists and 131 surgeons. The study found that internists walked about 564 steps per hour while surgeons walked around 536 steps per hour. The figures make sense when one compares it to other professions, for example airline crew members on long flights who walk approximately 842 steps per hour. Meanwhile, patients with artificial hips walk around 143 steps per hour.

Standing Workstations

The bottom line is that it is important for radiologists to take regular breaks from sitting. While there are no guidelines with respect to the frequency of these breaks, it is nevertheless important to have some form of physical activity during a work shift. According to Richardson, the presence of a standing workstation can help achieve this goal. "The simple act of standing increases [one's energy] expenditure an extra 13 percent over baseline, when compared with sitting. The growing availability and use of standing desks suggests that they can be a major tool in reducing workplace sedentary time and obesity."

Adding purposeful exercise opportunities through the availability of fitness equipment can also help improve the overall health of employees who work in a sedentary position. In fact, the University of Washington's Radiology Department has a treadmill under a standing workstation desk and an elliptical trainer that also fits under a sitting desk. These devices have no negative impact on the radiologist's diagnostic performance and do not cause any additional noise in the reading room. The conclusion is that even radiologists have ways to increase physical activity at work to provide incremental benefits to their health and quality of life.

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