

## Sit to Stand Workstations

### Considerations

Sit-to-stand work stations enable users to easily alternate between work in a sitting and standing position, which may be particularly useful for some individuals with medical conditions that are aggravated by prolonged sitting. The user should ensure that they build up their standing tolerance and change position frequently as prolonged standing can be hazardous. Anti-fatigue mats may also need to be considered for use when standing.

Sit-stand workstations can in some instances aggravate existing injuries/medical conditions or present a risk for new injury. For example lower back, knee and ankle injuries as well as conditions such as arthritis can be aggravated by increased standing. It is important that the implementation of a sit-stand desk is in line with an employee's treating health practitioner's recommendations.

The cost of a sit-stand workstation, office modifications and additional assistive equipment will need to be met by the work area.

### Requesting a sit to stand workstation

#### Staff members with a Medical Condition

Staff members need to obtain *medical evidence* of their condition, which includes that a sit-stand workstation is required. The medical evidence helps inform the choice of sit-stand product, which is important because different products have varying amounts of force to raise/lower them, and some products are inadvisable for some conditions.

The medical evidence:

- Must come from a treating medical professional i.e. specialist, nominated treating doctor, physiotherapist and or occupational therapist.
- Should include details of the condition, symptoms and recommended treatment options, including the need for a sit-stand workstation, and preferably guidance on timeframes for alternating between sitting and standing.
- May be provided in a report, letter or email (basically in writing).
- Should be provided to the staff member's supervisor unless requested otherwise. If the WHS Unit has been involved then a copy of the medical evidence should be provided to them.

An ergonomic assessment with an Independent Rehabilitation provider may be required based on your medical condition. This assessment will:

- Assess the employee's current workstation set-up, job demands and impact of any medical conditions on their work capacity.
- Make recommendations which may include increasing mobility, modification to work techniques, workstation set-up or ergonomic equipment. Recommendations will be based around physical requirement and suitability rather than employee preference for a sit-stand workstation.

Once completed, the assessment report will be forwarded to the employee and manager outlining their recommendations and advice on type of workstation to meet individual and office requirements. Considerations will include:

- Decreasing sedentary behaviours by introducing a mobility plan
- Current office configuration
- Space/storage requirements
- Electrical and IT requirements
- Cost of purchasing and installing the workstation.

Supervisors should contact the WHS Unit for advice on equipment selection and purchase.

### **Wellbeing Initiatives**

Increasingly, staff are interested in sit-stand workstations to reduce prolonged sitting and improve health and wellbeing.

Staff members should approach their supervisor or manager to discuss their needs and any opportunities to purchase this equipment.

Supervisors and managers should contact the WHS Unit to discuss their needs to ensure appropriate equipment is purchased. There may be an opportunity to 'trial' certain equipment

### **Funding**

The CSU work unit, school or faculty is responsible for the cost of the external ergonomic assessment and any equipment recommended.

Workplace adjustment funds may be available through the Finance Review Committee (FRC) if there is a requirement for special (non-standard) equipment and if it totals over \$1000.

### **Sit-to-stand Equipment options**

There are two types of sit-to-stand workstations.

1. Portable: a module that sits on top of the desk and is able to be raised and lowered
2. Complete windup or electric desk: a desk of varying size and specification that can be raised and lowered.

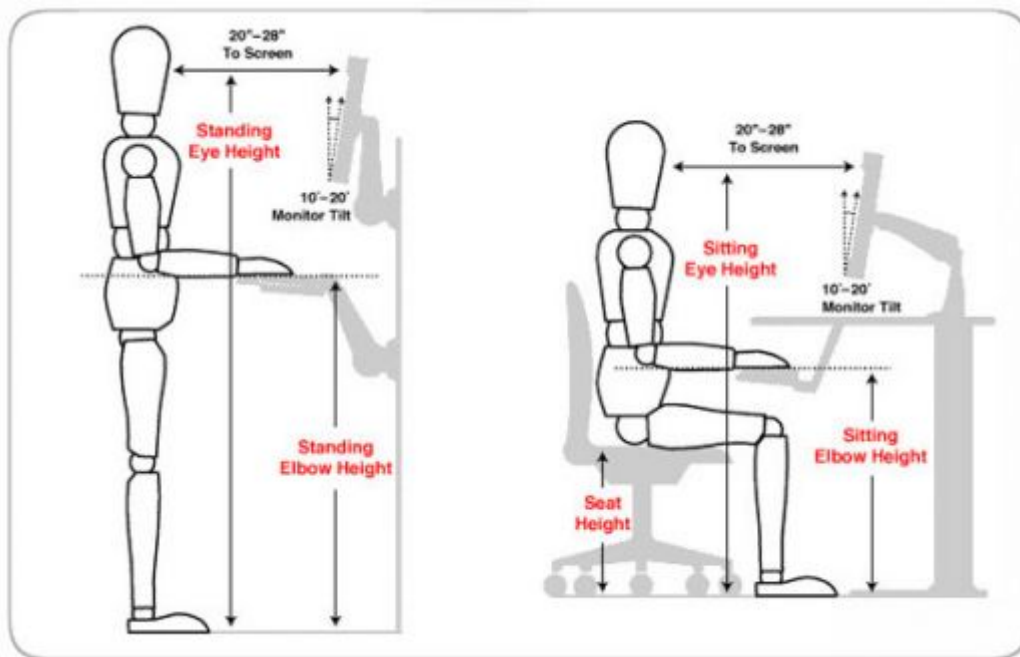
Sit-to-stand portable modules are designed to be used with an existing desk. They may sit directly on, or are attached to an existing desk and provide a cost-efficient mechanism for alternating between sitting and standing. They are useful with workstations that are pre-configured with adjoining partitions. Prices range from around \$500 to \$1000

Sit-to-stand (height adjustable) desks allow everything on the desk to be raised or lowered, and can be adjusted to suit the height of the user. The desk should have a minimum of 100kg safe working load (which includes the weight of the desk top surface) and ideally be motor-operated with plug into the wall (not a battery pack which can be more prone to failure) to enable ease of adjustment. For mixed tasks (e.g. keyboard and clerical work), the work surface should have minimum dimensions of 1600 mm x 800 mm (AS/NZS 4442: 1997). Prices range from around \$500 for a single straight desk to \$2000+ for a corner workstation.

Please contact the WHS Unit for further information on equipment selection and purchase.

### **Setting up your sit-to-stand workstation**

Users should aim for the same monitor and keyboard set-up when moving between sitting and standing. That is, elbows should be at a 90 degree angle when hands are on the keyboard, monitor should be about an arm's length away from the user and eyes should be level with the top of the monitor or top of the text being viewed.



### **Tips for sitting less at work**

There are many simple changes you can make to reduce the time you spend sitting at work. Introducing a height-adjustable workstation (or sit-stand desk) is just one, and should not be considered as a first option!

Ways to sit less at work include:

- Stand up during meetings / Conduct standing meetings or add one or more standing agenda items
- Stand during phone calls (considering ordering a headset)
- Eat your lunch away from your desk



- Move your bin away from your desk
- Conduct walking meetings where appropriate
- Walk to a colleague's desk instead of phoning or emailing
- Drink more water
- Use the stairs
- Stand to greet a visitor
- Go for a short walk at lunchtime
- Stand at the back of the room during long presentations
- Have standing morning teas for social functions.
- Walk more at work - park your car further away from your building; use stairs instead of elevators; take a long route to the bathroom or photocopier
- Set a timer to remind you to stand up and stretch every 30 minutes, and use this time to clean your work area.

**Further Information:**

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