

We have a new category of active sedentary people, who are fit due to their exercise programs but are at risk of health problems because they sit for the rest of the day.

Office danger

Your chair is killing you



WELLNESS
with Hamish McMichael

PROLONGED sitting has a devastating impact on your health. It promotes weight gain, Type 2 diabetes and dozens of chronic diseases. Some researchers are even stating that sitting is the new smoking.

Dr James Levine from the Mayo Clinic showed that for every hour you sit down, your life expectancy decreases by two hours. In comparison, statistical analysis shows that smoking a cigarette reduces your life expectancy by 11 minutes. So, in some respects, prolonged sitting may be actually be worse than smoking.

If you think that because you go to the gym and have an exercise program you're covered, you're wrong. We have a new category of active sedentary people, who are fit due to their exercise programs but are at risk of health problems because they sit for the rest of the day. The fact is that one hour of exercise can't combat the effects of 10 hours of sitting.

However, I do believe that a well-designed high-intensity exercise program is an important ingredient for a healthy lifestyle. Considering that 70% of Australians don't engage in vigorous exercise at all and spend most of their day sitting, perhaps it's more realistic to just start getting any form of movement into their daily routines.

Before you go and hurl your office chair out the window, a vital fact is that it's not the total amount of time we spend sitting that's the problem, it's how often you break up sitting. Let me explain this further. Standing up 20 times a day is an antidote to prolonged sitting. Standing up 20 times in a row all at once does not give you the same benefits of standing up once every 20 minutes for seven hours. Walking for two minutes every 20 minutes of sitting is even more effective.

Sitting still for long periods appears to age cells faster. In a



Some researchers claim that sitting is the new smoking.

PHOTO: ERIC BAILEY

University of California study, sedentary women who sat for more than 10 hours a day and had less than 40 minutes of physical activity showed cell age that was accelerated by eight years compared to their more active colleagues. Sitting even ages our DNA – we are born to move, not sit on our butts.

So what can you do?

- ▶ Stand up every 20 minutes – set a timer on your computer/phone if you need to.
- ▶ Don't sit for more than 50 minutes every hour – stand, walk or do exercises as alternatives.

▶ Walk every day. Aim for 10,000 steps a day – you can use a fitness tracker or pedometer to measure this. This is an addition to your fitness routine.

▶ Add walking into your work tasks. For example, walk and talk on your phone, have walking meetings.

▶ Trial a standing workstation.

While an exercise program is important for a healthy lifestyle, this works best when added to an active lifestyle.

Visit Hamish at Kaizen Exercise Physiologists, 2/47 Sixth Ave, Maroochydore, and get your wellness on track.

Test your relationship

Compatibility down to 36 questions



RELATIONSHIPS
With Joanne Wilson

WHILE DJ Khaled, Justin Bieber and their mates are crooning "Oh-eh-oh-oh-oh, eh-oh, I'm the one. Oh-eh-oh-oh-oh, eh-oh, I'm the only one. Yeah, yeah!" how do you know if they're the one? Who then, for that matter?

New love is full of anxiety, apprehension and intense elation from an exciting flow of neurochemicals.

When you start seeing someone you're often juggling thoughts such as: "Will they love me back?", "Are we a good fit for each other?", "Will they disappoint me like the last disaster?" and "Should I text again?"

As barn dances went out of fashion, then came speed dating, then the Farmer Wants a Wife show, The Bachelor/ette, RSVP and e-Harmony websites. Now there's Plenty of Fish or Tinder that simplify the matchmaking process to a simple swipe left/right.

In our immediate society that allows access to way too much too easily, it's no surprise we want to fast-track the process of finding 'the one' as well.

Having found your like-minded person, sometimes without leaving the house, then what? What if there was a way to find out if you have a deeper connection really, really, quickly? Say in the form of a handy questionnaire?

Turns out there is. Thanks to the wonders of psychology.

Curious? Read on!

The 36 questions

Way back in the misty past, in that far-off time of 1997, psychologist Arthur Aron and associates published a paper called *The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness: A Procedure and Some Preliminary Findings*.

As the incredibly sexy, catchy title says, the goal was to find out if you could ascertain how compatible you might be with



Vulnerability is the secret to determining your compatibility.

PHOTO: SCOTT WEBB

another person through a simple procedure. They formed a series of 36 questions for each partner to ask the other, broken down into three sets.

How does it work?

By encouraging both people to be open and vulnerable with each other, it fosters closeness. According to the study, "One key pattern associated with the development of a close relationship among peers is sustained, escalating, reciprocal, personal self-disclosure."

As we all know, it's scary being vulnerable with another person. We actively avoid that kind of deep emotional openness as much as possible. We might reveal something embarrassing or shameful. Even people in long-term committed relationships can struggle with being vulnerable with their partners.

This is why such questions are handy at speeding up the whole 'getting to know someone at an intimate level' thing. Each set of questions probes deeper and asks for more vulnerability than the set before. In set one you're asking things like "Would you like to be famous? What for?" and "Describe your perfect day". By set three, you're asking "If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?"

This is rather intense for a first date so please don't underestimate the value of vulnerability and face-to-face interaction over time. Through this gradual, mutual openness you'll quickly learn some rather deep truths about each other.

It's been said we're looking for warmth, attractiveness and resources – not necessarily in that order.

Delving beyond the superficial early in the relationship (especially before sex when the love drug oxytocin takes over) gives you a great advantage to discern if this is a life partner, a suitable breeder or co-parent.

If you're interested in reading the full 36 questions, you can read them on my website, blog or on my app.

Is it really necessary to cut that deep to start with? Necessary – not so much. Useful, on the other hand – absolutely!

I find that happy couples who found people who closely matched their ideals ended up with longer lasting, more satisfying relationships that are more resilient to navigating a wonderful life of challenges, conflict and joy.

Maybe Bieber is helpful: "Don't let the only real one intimidate ya".

Try answering a few intense questions as you might be their one sooner rather than later.

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