

Sitting Kills Your Body

Over the holidays I was home visiting my family in Massachusetts. My nearly 80yr old father who looks like he is in his 60's was showing me his latest Tai Chi movements but was having a hard time with his kicks. He said balancing on one leg was difficult for him and his foot was also tingling. Me being a strength coach I started to think about my father's movement patterns. Hmmm zilch, nada, zero. My father sits morning, noon and night. Whether it's watching tv, at his computer or work he sits and unfortunately my father is like most Americans. We sit way too much and it is killing our body. The average person sits 13 hours a day. No wonder we have an obesity problem in this country

I started to think about my dad's last injury a torn quad playing tennis and how his sitting most certainly contributed to this. After a quick assessment I found out my dad's hips were tight as drums and his glutes did not fire. Most importantly his glute medius didn't fire which was why he couldn't balance on one leg. I gave him 5 exercises to perform every morning and night while I was home for 10 days. I checked on my dad everyday and he said he seemed to be getting better but couldn't tell. On the fifth day he called me to show me something. He performed his kicks without falling and had a huge smile on his face. My dad also said his foot which tingled before no longer tingled. Five days after assessing my dad and giving him a script he was moving better. It made me think about the aging population and the idea that we lose proprioception significantly as we age. But what if it is also the fact as we age we become less active and sit more then the average of 13 hours a day. Even activities for the aging population are sitting and not standing which is the last thing they should do. Sitting for long periods changes your body for the worse. Your hip flexors shorten, your head shifts forward, (forwards head posture), your shoulders and back round (kyphosis) and your glutes shut off. It's very easy for your glutes to turn off if you sit a lot. Most people don't realize there glutes shut off and as a result have back, knee or hip pain . Your butt is made up of 3 muscles: **Gluteus Maximus**, the broad, thick, outermost muscle of the buttocks, involved in the rotation and extension of the thigh. **Glute Medius** and **Glute Minimus**. The **Glute Medius and Minimus** internally and externally rotates your hip and is activated when standing on one leg. If you have a hard time balancing on one leg check your glute medius. It most likely isn't firing correctly as was the case with my father.

Sitting for long periods also adversely effects your bodies circulation. All of this can add to significant knee, back or hip pain. Also these changes in your body can change your gate (how you walk) and balance. This is what plagues many of our older population because they sit al day. Most of us sit too much or too long here are five simple exercises you should do daily if you sit too much.

1. Glute Bridge – 2x15 reps
2. Balance on One Leg – 3x30 seconds each leg
3. Mini Band side walks – 3x10yds
4. Single Leg Hip Thrust – 3x10 each leg
5. Prone Band Hip Abduction – 3x12 ea. leg