

The Desk

As Attorneys, a large percentage of our work is done by sitting at our desk in front of a computer. This is even more applicable to commercial attorneys, who spend a lot of their time drafting documents. There is research indicating that the normal sitting desks is actually bad for our health. Medical researchers actually refer to sitting as the “new smoking”. The first well publicised report on sitting behind a desk was during 2014. During the last few years companies are trying to restructure their work space and there is an increase in sit-stand desks. The concept allows you to sit at your desk as normal and it further allows you to lift the entire desk so you can continue working, whilst standing. However, there are some standing desks that are designed solely for standing. Research has shown that this modern-day concept of a standing desk will counteract many health issues associated with sitting for long periods. Standing desks also assist in boosting physical activity and energy levels. People using standing desks are less fatigued.

Companies have noticed an increase in productivity in offices that they have introduced standing desks. Standing desks reduces appetite and dietary requirements. In fact, when you stand you burn more calories, it reduces your risk for heart diseases and for most Attorneys it would take away the “pain in the neck”. So, for all those who are watching the scale, this will definitely help.

The new trend towards standing desks are, however, not shared by everyone. According to Alan Hedge, a professor in the Department of Design and Environment Analysis at Cornell University, sitting isn't the problem. He states the following “If what you're doing is replacing sitting with standing, you're not actually doing your body any favours – in fact, you're introducing a whole variety of new risk factors”. He further goes on to say that it is neither the standing nor the sitting that is the problem, it is the risk factor, if you are not moving, the risk remains the same.

Gina Trapani, an American tech blogger, web developer, and writer gives us two reasons why she prefers the standing desks, which is higher calorie burn and better posture. She goes on and states the following “When I'm sitting at my desk, even in a fancy ergonomic chair, I tend to slump, with my back curved and shoulders forward, which closes my chest and makes my breathing more shallow. When standing at a desk where my forearms are at a 90 degree angle on the desk surface, my shoulders go back, which makes my spine concave and opens my chest. Besides the initial foot pain and muscle aches of engaged thighs and calves, it feels great.”

Many international companies have started to introduce the concept of a standing desk. Even though the trend has started in South Africa, many are still sceptical. It remains to be seen whether this trend catches fire and is here to stay. Perhaps, it may just become the new normal in the sedentary labour force.

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