

Welcome to the Quitting Sitting Transition Plan.



We're here to make sure your transition to a standing desk improves your health, happiness, and productivity – without any pain or difficulty along the way.

If you ever have any questions, you can always visit the blog. And of course, feel free to send us an email: [info@quittingsitting.com](mailto:info@quittingsitting.com)

*Have fun improving your health and productivity!*

## The Quitting Sitting Transition Plan Consists of Four Sections:

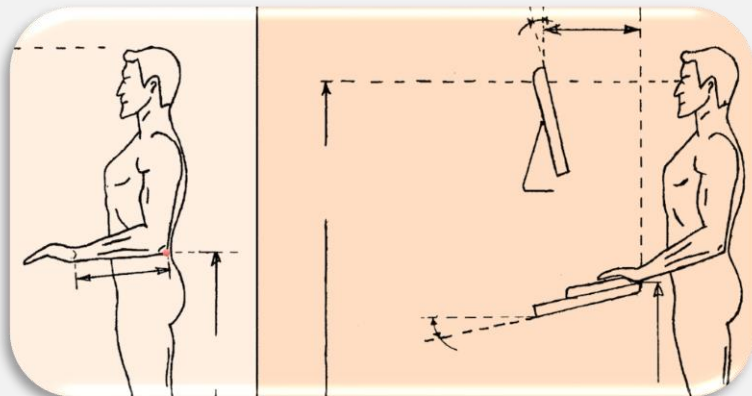
### Upgrade Your Environment

Because traditional desks and chairs are limiting you.



### Enhance Your Posture

Because “not sitting” isn’t the right way to stand.



### Improve Your Movement

Because your next position is your best position.



### Troubleshooting

Because standing right should make you feel amazing.



# Upgrade Your Environment

Learning any position, motion, or posture takes time. The body needs to adapt properly and comfortably.

Just like breaking in new running shoes requires time for a successful transition, switching to standing at work should not be an overnight process. **You'll need a transition game plan.**

It's important to first have the proper equipment to help make a successful transition to an upright working posture. Modifying your desk or purchasing a height adjustable desk is the first step, along with making sure your standing surface supports a comfortable standing experience.

*Get your custom standing desk measurements, and even free plans to build your own, [here](#).*

Consider investing in an [anti-fatigue mat](#), or platform. Next think about your shoes and if they are conducive to the increased time you'll spend standing.

High heels shorten the achilles tendon and tighten the calves, so they're not the best choice for increasing your standing time. Instead, try flats, athletic shoes, or even socks. **Wearing socks or standing barefoot can allow for a lot of foot and ankle variation as you stand, thus making it more comfortable to stand for longer periods.**

**|** *Tip: Keep two alternate pairs of shoes at your desk and switch between them 1-2 times per day to avoid foot and ankle fatigue.*

**Ergonomic positioning is important as you set up your standing workstation.** The top 1/3 of the monitor should be at eye level with a 20 degree upwards tilt. The monitor should be approximately arm distance from your body. Your elbows should be open – beyond 90 degrees – while typing, and if possible the keyboard should have a downward slant of 10-20 degrees. [This calculator](#) will give you custom measurements and (optionally) free plans to build your own desk. Consider consulting with an ergonomic specialist to ensure your workstation is fitted properly to your body dimensions.

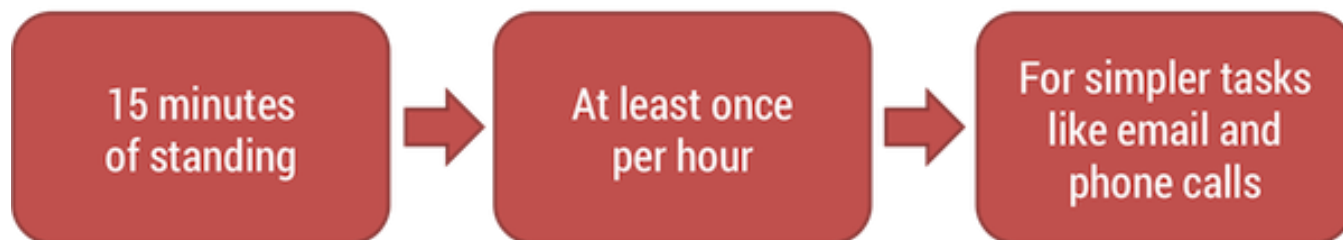
## STEP 1

Modify or replace your desk to facilitate standing



Soften your standing surface

## STEP 2 - BEGIN THE STANDING TRANSITION



Begin by using your standing station incrementally. Then start standing longer and longer. Be sure to listen to your body and sit when you are fatigued. If you experience any discomfort, see the [Troubleshooting](#) section at the end of the guide.

Try using your standing station as the “entryway to your desk” starting with the first 15 minutes of the day, then using it 15 minutes before and after lunch, and again for the last 15 minutes of the day.

At first these short periods of 15 minutes will get you ready and excited to continue to use the standing desk. These short standing sessions will add variety and help to keep your mind fresh by varying your posture. Stand for tasks that require alertness and agile variation of tasks, such as phone conversations, preparing for meetings, responding to daily email, and periods requiring frequent walking breaks, such as quick work between back to back meetings.

**Tip:** Schedule your day to align routine tasks with your standing time.

As you get used to spending more time standing, you will find that some tasks and projects are just better with a standing desk, and others are best performed while sitting. This is exactly how you should use your transition to a standing desk: learn which tasks are more productive and enjoyable while standing, and which are better done while sitting. **Use this time to listen to your body; it’s up to you to decide how fast or slow you would like to make this transition.**

**Tip:** Find a balance of sitting/standing to help with productivity by varying your work environment throughout the day to best suit the nature of the task.

# Enhance Your Posture

After the first 1-2 weeks, you may start to feel more agile and productive using a standing desk for certain tasks.

Once you're used to standing, we suggest trying to avoid sitting for more than an hour at a time. Get up for a standing-desk break, water break, or just some fresh air.

When you do stand, it's important to stand well. Here we'll cover exactly what healthy standing posture involves.

Here's how to set yourself, standing tall with balanced posture:

## HEALTHY STANDING DESK POSTURE

1. Start with your feet shoulder width apart, toes pointed forward.
2. Arch your lower back (slightly sticking your butt out).
3. Tighten your abdominals to support your back in a neutral position.
4. Lift your shoulders up, then roll backwards and down, relax in this posture.
5. Center your head above your shoulders.

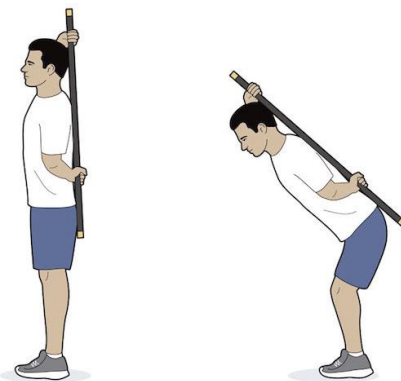
Try using the above steps to "set your posture" when you walk up to the standing desk. It's a great starting position, creating good muscle memory habits when approaching your standing desk.

## Keep that Butt Tight

A key feature of healthy standing is activation of the glute muscles. When sitting, these strong hip-hinging muscles are stretched, less active, and often weaker than they should be. While introducing more standing into your work day, making sure to activate and use your glutes while moving is key for preventing back pain and standing fatigue. Below we will go into detail on how to properly use your glute muscles and how to strengthen them to enhance your posture.

Healthy Standing  
Starts with  
Healthy Posture

Hip hinging is a natural motion that involves bending the torso forward at the hips (leg joint right below the low back), rather than bending at the spine which is less flexible than the hips and more prone to injury. **This motion uses the large glute muscles and takes pressure off the delicate low back joints.** When standing keeping these muscles mildly activated will help with stability and endurance, and create lasting muscle memory.



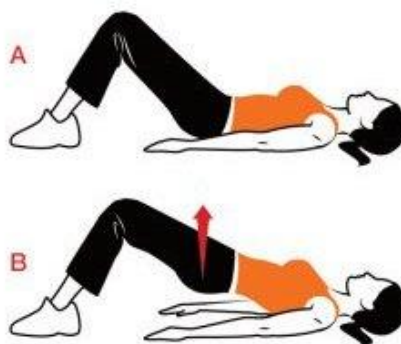
Bend at the hips, but keep your back ram-rod straight.

It's important to learn hip hinging because it will help strengthen and bring needed awareness to the underused glute muscles that often sit dormant with years of sitting. **It will also help you correct faulty movement patterns often associated with poor seated posture, like bending with the low back rather than at the hips.**

**With years of sitting, some very important muscles have become underutilized.** We included some basic exercises to help you re-discover your gluts, and learn how to properly bend at the hips.

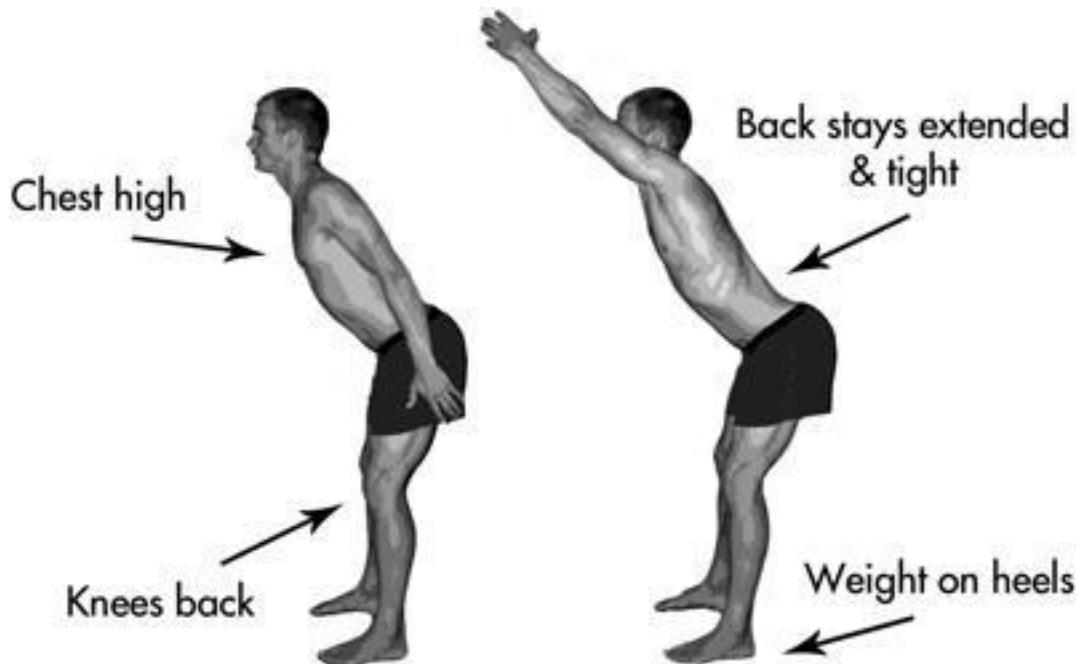
While standing straight up put your weight towards your heels and squeeze your buttock muscles together; feel them activate. Now bend forward at your hips as if to actively engage at a task on your desk. Make sure your back is straight, but your tailbone pushes backwards so that you feel a stretch in the hamstrings. **This motion uses the hips to hinge forward while the spine remains relatively straight.**

The following exercises will help reinforce these two components:



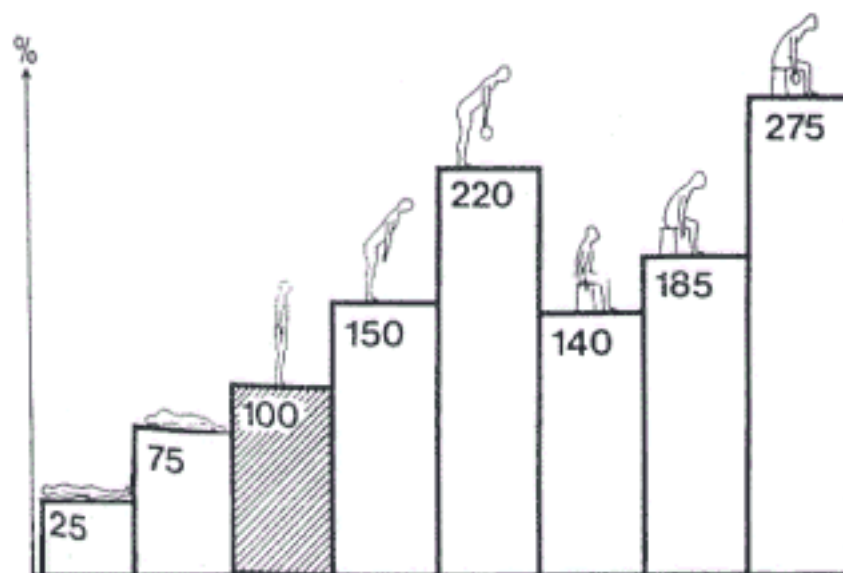
Pelvic Bridging Exercises – [Click here](#) to learn more.





Foundation Training – [Watch the instructional video here.](#)

Again, the goal of these exercises is to help you engage and use muscles that have been underutilized with years of sitting. With any change in posture and exercise, moderation must be used and it should be understood that there will be a period of new aches and pains as the body begins its adaptation.



This graph shows pressure on the spine in various positions; notice that sitting puts more pressure on spinal discs than does standing. [\[Image Credit\]](#)

I'll bet that graph gets you excited to enjoy the reduced spinal pressure of healthy standing!

# Improve Your Movement

The single biggest benefit of standing is that it makes you more likely to move.

“Standing beats sitting because it allows for more movement.”

*We've covered before (and before that) just how important small movement is for your health.*

One of the first things you'll notice with your transition to a standing desk is that your body will naturally shift from side to side to maintain comfort –**encourage these movements.**

You'll notice one knee bend and the opposite hip will tilt outward, and then minutes later this posture will shift to the opposite side. If you tend to favor one side, try to avoid this uneven habit. **Remember that a variety of standing positions is the goal.**

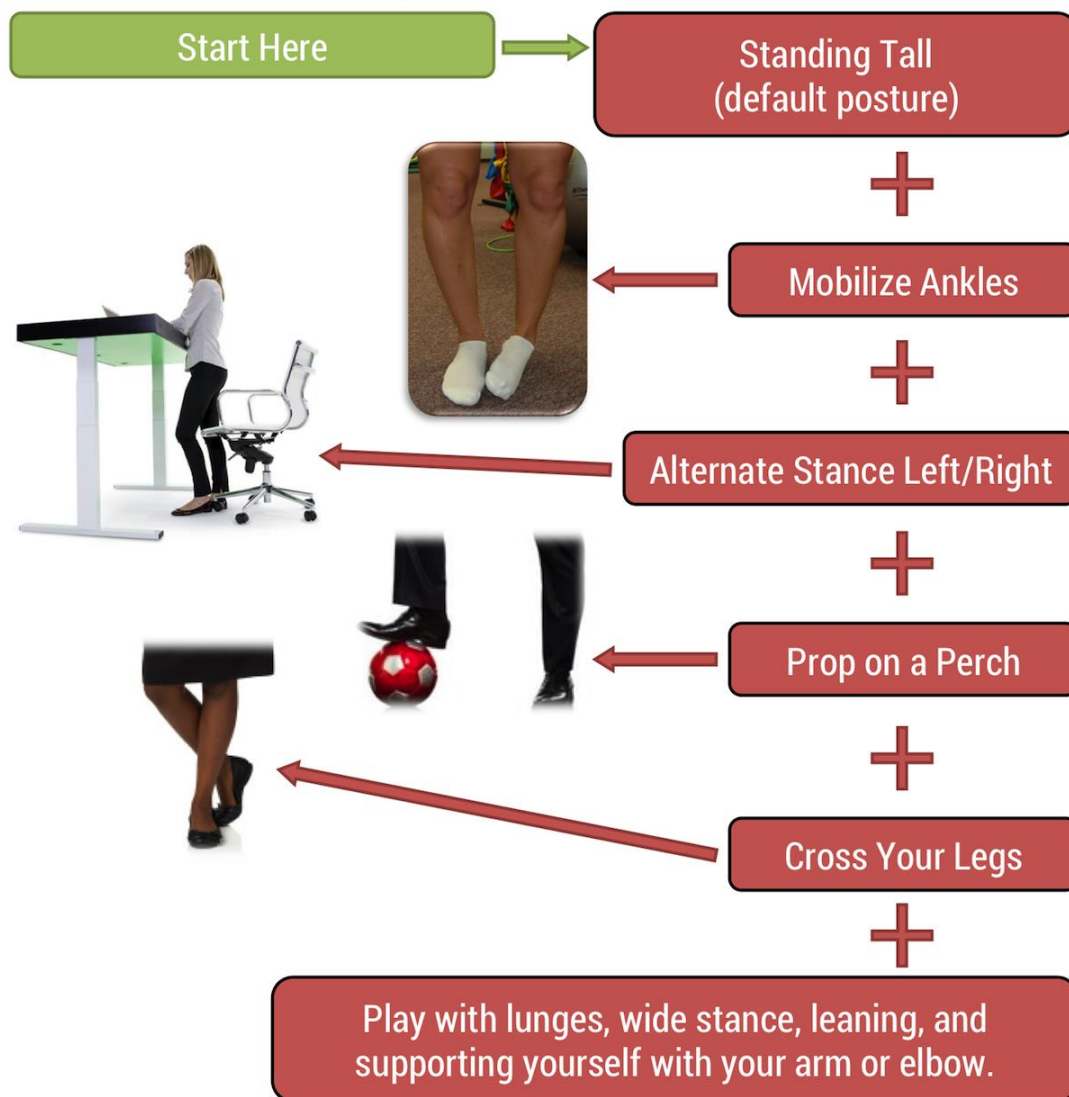
## Accessorize Your Ideal Standing Posture with Healthy Movement

See the next page for a graphical overview of basic standing postures and movements to switch through while working at your standing station.



# STANDING DESKS

## IMPROVE YOUR MOVEMENT



Have fun with these movements. I know it sounds silly, but this stuff really can be fun.

*Tip: It's important to avoid slouching while standing at your computer. If you slouch while leaning forward then you are defeating some of the benefits of standing by incorrectly loading your spine.*

Use these variations of positioning to avoid the bad habit of slouching (reference [posture section](#)) as you get accustomed to your standing workstation. **When standing at a workstation your body will want to move to maintain comfort so using different positions properly can lead to healthy habit formation.** If you avoid the natural urge to move around slightly (via the standing variations above) then your back will compensate by slouching (flexing forward). Now is the time to establish good habits and healthy movements!

# Troubleshooting Your Standing Desk

“Because standing right should make you feel amazing.”

Sitting is bad, so we switch to standing. But if something goes wrong, standing can be downright painful. We built this transition plan because we were seeing people hurt themselves over and over again.

So this troubleshooting section – even though it’s the end of the plan – was the beginning of our work here. Because these are real problems that real people have. And we need to make those problems a thing of the past.

## Standing Desk Problems & How to Fix Them Now

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### Foot Numbness / Tingling

Foot “falling asleep” and only waking up once you move? These symptoms should always be taken seriously and can be a sign of a serious medical condition. However, this issue is often benign and easily solved.

#### *The Cause*

Standers often get “stuck” in one position, forgetting to change stances and postures for extended periods.

When “locked out,” you may be inadvertently hyperextending your knees and/or putting too much stress on some sensitive nerves at that joint. Specifically the common peroneal nerve, which wraps around the outside portion of your knee can cause irritation and numbness when over stretched or compressed.

#### *The Fix*

Try using the above stances and postures to vary leg positioning and relieve this stress. Also check with your medical provider if it is not improving as it could be a sign of a serious condition.

# Foot Pain

Are your dogs barking? We've heard some pretty rough pain reports from rookie standers.

## *The Cause*

With prolonged standing the arches and heels of the feet can often get quite sore and fatigued. Especially when your standing surface doesn't support you the right way. The problem isn't that the floor is too hard, it's that it doesn't allow/require enough "micromovement" of the feet and ankles. Overly supportive shoes (think standard bulky running shoes) can cause the same issue.

## *The Fix*

Consider taking a short break from standing to sit and give your feet a rest. Try switching between two different pairs of shoes, ditching the high heels, and adding some barefoot standing to change the pressure points on your feet. Finally, consider investing in an [anti-fatigue mat](#).

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# Back Pain

## The Cause

With any long term change in posture or position at work, aches and pains may develop. In fact maybe you wanted a standing desk to avoid back pain, only to find you have different back pain now. Often when standing, one can put too much extension on the low back creating extra pressure on the spinal joints.

## The Fix

Check [the posture section](#) to learn how to hold a straight / neutral spine while standing, and how to engage your glut muscles to take pressure off the spine. Remember that allowing flexion at the hips rather than the spine is key to proper standing biomechanics.

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# Leg Fatigue

There's no doubt that at some point in your transition to a standing desk you will experience leg fatigue. In fact you may feel you've hit a plateau where you can't stand longer than an hour or two. You may feel like a continual need to sit, and find that you'll even forget to use the standing desk. Don't be disheartened.

## *The Cause*

A little Occam's Razor here: if your legs are tired, it's probably from using them a lot. And that's good! People who end up tired at the end of the day are normally healthy people. If it feels like you're experiencing abnormally intense fatigue, it may be the result of moving too little.

## *The Fix*

Remember to [keep it moving](#) while you're standing. Remember to start each work session at the standing desk, then to transition to the sitting desk after you get tired or fatigued from standing. Think of sitting as taking a break from standing – a brief rest and recovery position. When you are refreshed try for another session using the standing desk. Worst case – just stand less for a while. This isn't a competition, and no one is judging you.

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*Do you have pain that isn't listed here? [Send us an email](#) and we'll add it to the guide. See the live updated version [here](#).*

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Congratulations – you've completed the Quitting Sitting Transition Plan. Of course, this stuff only helps if you actually go do it. So get to standing!

If you would like to share this guide with your friends, feel free. Point them to [the web version of the plan](#), or just send them right to the [download opt-in page](#).