Welcome to the podcast entitled Health and Wellness Briefs, tactics for a better you. I'm Dr. Bernadette Melnyk, Vice President for Health Promotion and Chief Wellness Officer at Ohio State University. This podcast series is brought to you by my CWO office and wonderful Buckeye Wellness team. In order to provide you with evidence based micro learning modules to optimize your health and well-being.

Our podcast starts by taking a dose of vitamin G, given that vitamin G or gratitude is one of the simplest research-based strategies to improve mood, sleep, optimism and reduce stress and blood pressure. Please take a few seconds now to think about who or what you're grateful for today. Give a dose of vitamin G to someone today for even more than benefit.

Today's topic is building movement into your day. My special guest is Josh Winn, who I have the blessing of having in my CWO office, as Wellness Program Manager. Josh is also a clinical instructor of practice in the College of Nursing. Josh, it's great to have you here today.

Yeah. Thanks, Bern. Thanks for having me on.

You bet, Josh. I always share evidence in a lot of my talks with people, and that evidence is that sitting is absolutely killing us. We have researched data that shows if we sit even 3 hours a day that increases our cardiac risk by 30%. If we sit 5 hours a day, that's comparable to smoking 1 1/4 packs of cigarettes every day. Everybody laughs when I share that data, but then nobody stands up. I often say that's because of culture. We know culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

So, the first question that I have for you today. What are the key benefits of incorporating movement or physical activity throughout the day, even in small doses? How does it contribute to overall health and well-being?
Josh Winn

Yeah, great question. I think to kind of piggyback off of your comment with sitting, when we sit for 3-4 hours throughout the day, we’re really beginning to disengage what our body is doing. You know, when we sit, we’re disengaging our core. We’re cutting off circulation to our body. So, when we’re able just to simply move, we’re doing what our bodies is actually supposed to be doing.

Embracing our core overtime can prevent injuries from occurring in the workplace, which is one of the number one leading causes of disability worldwide. So just moving every 45 minutes to 60 minutes whether it’s you know getting up out of your chair can prevent you from many of those chronic conditions that we have.

Another key benefit for movement throughout the day is it helps to manage our energy levels. When you look at how we expend energy throughout the day, non-exercise activity is equates to almost 20% of our total caloric expenditure. So when we’re sitting for long periods of times, you know, we’re not able to expend the amount of calories that we’re taking in, which can result in obesity, diabetes, hypertension, many of the chronic diseases that we’re seeing today. I would say those are the two benefits that really kind of stick out, simply moving every 45 to 50 minutes.

Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Absolutely. Josh, I really want people to hear is 6 out of 10 people in America have a chronic disease, but 80% of chronic disease is totally preventable. With just a few healthy lifestyle behaviors, such as moving throughout your day. For individuals with sedentary jobs or life stats, can you give some practical strategies to add more movement into daily routines without disrupting work responsibilities.

Josh Winn

Yeah, great question. I remember one of our regional campus Deans who put a box on their deck. If you remember this, it was a cardboard box and so promoted that standing a lot of times when we think about some of the barriers, it’s there is a financial barrier with purchasing standing desks in that and we don’t have to spend $300.00 to $400.00 standing desks. Just a simple box with our keyboard or our laptops on top would suffice. That recommendation of just standing throughout the day.
Another great example that we provide is with our meetings trying to shorten them from 60 minutes to 50 minutes. It helps us be more strategic and those meetings that we have and then it allows for individuals to focus on their well-being, particularly movement within that 10 minute asked from there.

Another key strategy that can be incorporated for everyone and not just in the workplace, but outside the workplace, is where we decide to park. A lot of people spend more minutes finding that spot close to their work or to the grocery store, wherever it is. Where if we just park in towards the back of the parking lot, we can take that time up with walking. Getting in our steps takes about one minute to get roughly around 100 steps in. So, if you think if you Park 2 minutes away there’s 200 steps there and then another 200 steps back. So, you’re close to the recommendation of steps throughout the day.

00:07:56 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Those are excellent suggestions. I had the pleasure of walking into that regional Deans office and seeing that box that was created for him to stand more. I was so excited because he was role modeling what he really wanted his people to do. That is so very key. We, as faculty, staff by role modeling the behaviors will excite and motivate more people to do so as well.

00:08:43 Josh Winn

It gets back to the culture that you were talking about earlier. If I see my Dean, or in my case, you know, Chief Wellness Officer constantly standing in the workplace, that’s going to motivate me to stand as.

00:08:57 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Absolutely. So, can you now share some examples of simple yet effective exercises or movements that people can easily integrate into their day? Particularly those with super busy schedules.

Josh, before you do that though, I want to follow up because you mentioned shortening meetings. There was a recent study that came out that showed a decrease in meetings by 40% leads to an increase in productivity by 70%. So, I just really want to reinforce cutting down length of meetings or eliminating them altogether, we often laugh about getting rid of stupid stuff. But seriously, a lot of meetings we have could either be eliminated or shortened and people could take that time to engage in movement or physical activity.

00:10:30 Josh Winn
Yeah. So, with that, I think the first part that we have to kind of consider is budgeting this into our daily life. If this is something that we want to be more conscious of, then we have to find that time to be more active. Recommendation is around every 45 to 50 minutes, we should do some type of physical activity.

Whether these are small movements such as you know, things that we can be done in our chair, simple types of stretches, doing different types of squats, if you're able to stand up out of your chair, a great exercise that can be done is chair squats.

I am a mover and I'm a Grover personally, so I love to dance. That's one of the ways that I like to add in more activity throughout the day. It's a great way to add in some of those steps counts from there if I'm dancing to some of my favorite songs, which I don't think we have time to go into today. You can add in roughly 300 to 400 steps just by bobbing back and forth.

Other things that we can do outside of our chairs, we're able to leave a great strategy is trying to promote us to walk longer. Which could be printing on a different floor, which requires us to utilize the stairs to get an extra steps from that. Same thing that can be also applied to going to the bathroom, which most people usually do throughout the day from there.

It's kind of stacking our type of behaviors with physical activity with things that we get to do throughout the work day. It can be very simple and also effective in increasing our physical activity.

00:12:04 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

That's great. Environment also matters. So how can people create an environment that supports movement and encourages an active lifestyle, especially at home or in their workspaces?

00:12:28 Josh Winn

One of the recommendations I've found is that if you're able to strategically place your workspace as far as away from the cafeteria, from the printer, from the bathroom, when we have to go engage in those types of activities where we have to walk there. So we kind of forcing ourselves, if you will to be physically active and overtime, you know that external motivation of being physically active turns into sort of factors from there.

Other aspects, as we talked about before is trying to find some type of standing desk. If we're standing throughout the day. Once again, we're encouraging our body to be more physically active through embracing the core, and that could be done with purchasing a
standing desk like we've talked about, or simply placing your office on a cardboard box, which is great.

00:13:23 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Lastly, I want us to talk about the mental or cognitive benefits associated with incorporating movement in our daily activities beyond all the physical advantages that activity has.

00:13:46 Josh Winn

Evidence shows that when we are meeting our physical activity recommendations, which by the way is 150 minutes of moderate activity throughout the week. Research has shown that individuals have lower levels of stress hormones like cortisol and epinephrine, which caused us to go into some of those cascades from there. But for those that are having those feelings of depression and anxiety, a great strategy to remediate those feelings is by moving throughout the body. So, we're able to utilize cortisol and epinephrine into a positive effects to reduce our feelings of stress.

There's some research that has been done on an older population actually with cognitive function, which is very fascinating. What they have found is that when we are active, you're actually causing more blood vessels to grow within the brain, particularly within the hippocampus, which is responsible for like memory retention.

So over time, when we're exercising, we're able to improve our cognitive function and executive function, which allows us to interact better with individuals and improve overall work and school performance as well.

00:14:59 Dr. Bernadette Melnyk

Absolutely. Recent research is showing physical activity can be as effective for many people as antidepressants for depression and anxiety. Bottomline everybody, we want to move more, stand more and sit less. Josh, thanks so much for joining me today.

Thank you for listening to Health and Wellness Briefs, tune in to other podcasts in this series to learn more evidence-based tips for healthier, happier and better you.