



Information for participants

Research Project Title:

To what extent does working from a standing desk influence cognitive performance?

Synopsis of project

Recent evidence shows that a high level of sedentary behaviour, such as prolonged sitting, is negatively correlated with an increased metabolic risk score, risk of cardiovascular events, and all-cause mortality.

The introduction of standing desks into the workplace offers a potential solution to the inactivity problem. Given that desks are typically workplace tools, it is logical to enquire about the effects of a standing desk on cognitive performance.

The goal of this project is to evaluate the effects of working from a standing desk compared with a seated desk on cognitive performance during a simulated working day.

What we are doing

To find out more we are asking all participants to perform 7.5 hours of tasks that emulate a typical office working day (e.g., transcription, data entry...) and various validated cognitive performance measures (e.g., solving puzzles, recalling numbers). All participants will attend two days; one day performed from a normal sitting desk, and one from a standing desk. Scheduled breaks are included, and standing desk participants are allowed to sit when they feel they need to (but are “encouraged” to stand as much as comfortable).

Participants will be asked to wear comfortable footwear, and match their dietary intake (i.e., coffee, sugars) for both days.

To participate in this study you will need to be between 18 and 50 years of age, and will need to feel confident in your ability to stand comfortably for extended periods of time. You will not be able to participate if you have 1) musculoskeletal pathologies preventing or influencing your ability to stand for prolonged periods, and 2) cognitive pathologies, such as chronic fatigue or any previous serious head injury, or be taking medications, which may affect concentration and cognitive performance.

What it will mean for you

Involvement in this study will require you to attend a familiarisation session of approximately 90 minutes at the Unitec Mount Albert campus. During this session you will get to see all the tasks that will be performed during the study, and will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the study before choosing to enrol.

If you choose to enrol, you will attend a full day (9:00 am to 4:30 pm) at the Unitec Mount Albert campus where you will be allocated to either a standing or sitting desk. You will be provided with numerous tasks to perform throughout the day, and will be guided through all tasks by a researcher. All tasks can be completed from the desk, and all tasks involve varying amount of cognitive load (i.e., they are all thinking tasks). There are three break periods throughout the day, and standing desk participants are allowed to sit when needed.

You will need to also attend a second day, approximately one week later, where you will repeat the day using a different desk (everyone will do one day from each desk). Upon completion of the second day you will be compensated with \$200 for your time. You may also be sent an overview of the findings upon completion of data analysis and interpretation.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. Your parent/guardian can also ask for you to be withdrawn.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you and the researchers involved will have access to this information.

Please contact us if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact the principal investigators:

Lucy Patston
021980509
(09)8154321#8475
lpatston@unitec.ac.nz

Jamie Mannion
021673832
(09)8154321#8475
jmannion@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2014-1085

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 25.9.14 to 25.9.17. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.