Take Time to Move!

CIOCCA CENTER
AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

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"Sitting is the new smoking" says countless numbers of news articles and public health studies. In Adam Merrill's book The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity, research shows that the less we move, the less energy goes to our brain. When our body is not moving, our brain goes on standby which releases chemicals that put our bodies to sleep lowering our alertness, thinking and judgment.

In order to take care of our physical and mental health, we must have empathy for ourselves. We are not machines, therefore we must thread in time for movement throughout the day to take care of our bodies. We must also recognize the importance of being empathetic towards others by being more understanding when somebody is in a dull mood or not being as productive. We can all agree that working and studying virtually in our seats all day is a very taxing way to live. Empathy is crucial when it comes to looking out for the public's health, improving health outcomes, and building trust. Empathy is essential to understanding people's health needs and seeing things from various community members' perspectives. By asking ourselves, "How can I enhance people's lives?" and seeking to understand the emotions, experiences, and motivations of others, we can solve many problems in the world that although might seem small, like making sure to move, are incredibly important.

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With the world feeling shut down and a whole year spent behind a computer screen, I can attest to my hours on end spent sitting negatively affecting my productivity, my performance in school, my relationships with others, and my overall health. A normal assignment that I could get done in one hour now took me three. School topics and classes that typically excited me, I found myself distracted and not paying attention. I could tell that I was not my normal energized positive self when hanging out with friends and family. I constantly felt tired, unmotivated, and worn out. With classes back in person this fall, I found myself constantly moving throughout my day. Whether it was

to and from classes, to the library, or on a walk with friends, the number of steps I took in a day greatly increased and so did my mood. I noticed that I was much more efficient with my schoolwork, more focused in my classes, and way more appreciative and happier to spend time with friends and family. I felt better all around. As some of my classes have returned to online and I find myself spending much of my time at that same desk in my bedroom all day long, I know that movement is something I need to prioritize in order to not fall back into that same state.

So, what can I do to prioritize moving throughout the day? First off, setting a reminder on my phone every hour or two to take a brain break by standing up and stepping away from the screen. Even if it's just stopping to go get a snack. Take a walk outside between classes. With classes online we skip out on our 10-minute passing period walking from building to building across campus. When watching TV, I challenge myself to stand up during commercial breaks. Be social by meeting a friend to go for a walk or rather than drive, walk to dinner with friends. Set up times with your friends to do a virtual "Walkie Talkie" where you chat on the phone while walking. Just a few simple things can make a huge difference in our lives. We are built to move!