



Don't Have a Seat! Extended Sitting Time May Shorten Lifespan *Standards for office environments and sporting equipment assist in a healthier lifestyle*

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Researchers in Australia have found that sitting for extended periods of time – particularly in front of the television – may shorten lifespan. [The study](#), published by the American Heart Association, followed nearly 9,000 adults for six and a half years. Researchers found that each daily hour of television viewing was associated with an 18 percent increase in deaths from heart disease and an 11 percent increase in overall mortality.

Fortunately, most consumers are able to control their tube time and maintain a healthier lifestyle overall. But for many who have office jobs, extended sitting time is an unavoidable consequence of being at work. Fortunately, there are standards to assure that office chairs promote proper sitting posture. The [Human Factors and Ergonomics Society \(HFES\)](#), a member and accredited standards developer of the [American National Standards Institute \(ANSI\)](#), developed [ANSI/HFES 100-2007, Human Factors Engineering of Computer Workstations](#), an American National Standard (ANS) that provides hardware design specifications for the safety and comfort of workers using computers.



Home offices are covered by standards for safety and durability, as well. [ANSI/BIFMA/SOHO S6.5-2008, Small Office/Home Office Furniture](#), is ANS developed by the [Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association \(BIFMA\)](#), an ANSI member and accredited standards developer. This standard is intended to provide a common basis of mechanical tests for evaluating the safety, durability, and structural adequacy of storage and desk-type furniture intended for use in the small office and/or home office.

Increasing physical activity outside of the workplace is an easy way to reduce the amount of time spent sitting each day. One part of the day where sitting may seem unavoidable is a long commute. Mornings and evenings spent in the car in rush hour traffic can add up to minutes or hours of sitting time every day. One reliable alternative that gets the blood pumping while en route to work is riding a bicycle. [ASTM International](#), an ANSI member and audited designator, has developed several American National Standards (ANS) for bicycle safety. One such standard, [ASTM F2043-09, Standard Classification for Bicycle Usage](#), defines terms used within the bicycle industry and specifies bike usage conditions, specifically for regular paved surfaces where the tires do not lose ground contact when going downhill in a speed over 25 miles per hour.



During the weekend, extended lounging may be caused by boredom. Many standards cover different kinds of sporting equipment that provide fun and safe alternatives to watching

television. One family activity that assures entertainment sans couch is swimming. Public pools are covered by an ANS authored by ANSI member and accredited standards developer the [Association of Pool and Spa Professionals](#). Providing guidelines for conventional pools, pools for competition, and wading pools, [ANSI/NSPI 1-2003, *Public Swimming Pools*](#), assures the safety of swimmers of all sizes.

A simple and inexpensive way to reduce the amount of time sitting on weekdays is to take evening walks with friends. While these strolls around the block are good for the body, walkers should take care to wear reflective materials so that they can be seen by passing cars after dark. [ASTM E1501-99\(2004\), *Standard Specification for Nighttime Photometric Performance of Retroreflective Pedestrian Markings for Visibility Enhancement*](#), a standard that guides these reflective materials, was developed by ASTM International.

Thanks to standards for ergonomic work environments, sitting in the office can be good for the body and comfortable, too. And whether swimming, cycling, or walking around the block, frequent physical activity made safe with the help of standards may lead to an increased lifespan. To read the study, [click here](#).

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