

# WHAT A PAIN: AMERICAN OFFICE WORKERS ARE HURTING

By [Rob Stott](#) / Apr 15, 2013 (*istockphoto/Thinkstock*)

*A majority of office workers experience physical pain on the job, according to a new American Osteopathic Association survey. AOA offers tips to prevent pain throughout the workday.*

Two-thirds of American office workers have experienced physical pain in the last six months, and nearly a quarter believe the pain is a standard part of having an office job, according to a new survey by the American Osteopathic Association.

“Chronic pain is a serious public health issue affecting 100 million Americans today—impacting more people than cancer, diabetes, and heart disease combined,” AOA [in a statement](#).

To educate the public, the group launched the “Break Through Your Pain” campaign, with tools and tips to help office workers stay pain-free at work.

“Sitting at a desk all day can take a serious toll on your body, and with busy work schedules and full family lives many office workers don’t seek help to prevent or treat their pain until it reaches the point where it interferes with their ability to do their job without the added distraction of constant pain,” Rob Danoff, a spokesman for the campaign and a family physician with Aria Health Systems, said in the statement. “Encourage everyone to get up and move. Take the long route to the printer or walk up the stairs instead of using the elevator. Making these small changes now will have a great impact on your overall health.”

The survey identified a variety of pain triggers, including sitting for five or more hours (which 70 percent of office workers said they do), hunching over at a desk (61 percent), sitting in an uncomfortable chair (58 percent), staring at a computer monitor (46 percent), and using a computer mouse (38 percent).

AOA offered seven tips to help office workers prevent pain and become more active throughout the workday:

**Don’t slouch.** Sit up straight and don’t hunch over your computer. This engages your abdominal muscles and reduces strain on your back.

**Keep your feet flat on the floor.** The rest of your body will respond and improve your posture.

**Keep your eyes straight ahead.** Place your computer monitor in a position where the top of the screen is at eye level to reduce strain on your neck muscles.

**Avoid the mouse trap.** As you type and move your mouse, make sure your elbows stay close to your body and your wrists are not bending too far forward or backward.

**Get up, stand up.** Set an alert on your calendar or phone for every 30 minutes to remind yourself to take a stretch break.

**Visit a neighbor.** Walk to a colleague’s desk to speak with him or her in person instead of emailing or calling. For longer conversations, hold a walking meeting.

**Take the road less traveled.** If possible, don’t take the elevator when you arrive at the office. Take a few extra moments to climb the stairs to get your blood flowing.

Have any other tips for staying pain-free at work? Share them in the comments.

“Reprinted with permission. Copyright, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership, April 15, 2013, Washington, DC.”