

## SEATING SOLUTION

Probably everyone has heard about how sitting or being stationary is harmful to your health. Well that is the truth. Any prolonged posture, such as sitting, will lead to static loading of the soft tissues and cause discomfort. Sitting has advantages and disadvantages for mobility, exertion of force, energy consumption, circulatory demands, coordination, and motion control. There have been numerous studies to confirm health issues related to sitting in occupational and/or recreational areas. I am going to use these studies in summary to show the relationship to deep vein stasis, musculoskeletal discomfort, and nerve compression. It is obvious that God intended humans to be mobile. Since Adam and Eve didn't eat from the Tree of Life, we now feel the results of our work and play. So, let's review the literature.

First, there is venous stasis, also known as deep venous thrombosis (DVT), which is related to long periods of sitting. Two million Americans have deep vein thrombosis every year including otherwise healthy adults, the elderly, and persons with and without a history of venous insufficiency. The common factor in DVT's has been prolonged immobility. There is also an association between seated immobility and venous thromboembolism (VTE) which coined the term 'SIT' (seated immobility thromboembolism) syndrome to encompass all forms of seated immobility associated with VTE. However, not everyone gets DVT's and/or VTE's but gets other uncomfortable symptoms after being stationary like "heavy" legs, paresthesia (tingling of the legs), pain, and numbness. In the average adult male with no health problems, they experience vague symptoms after 6 hours of sitting. We know that the average male has

increase venous volume in the lower extremities after five hours of sitting. To decrease the probability of DVT/VTE one needs cushioned seating, leg movement, and calf compression to assist the body with its natural process of moving blood through the venous system of the lower extremities. Therefore, when looking at air travel, desk jobs, and hunting, we have a potential for health issues. The average hunter is above the age of forty putting them at higher risk. So combine a long air flight to say, Alaska, and then sitting for over 8-10 hours in a stationary position, well . . . HOUSTON ... we have a problem. Prevention could be as easy as to avoid long periods of sitting, but that is not practical if you need a job, travel, or want to harvest wild game. Or more importantly, an individual confined to a wheelchair!!! So we should focus on what we sit on!

Second, there is musculoskeletal discomfort associated with seating. The most common reported site of discomfort is the lower back. Again, it's limitation of motion that is the predominate indicator for the discomfort. In association with sitting, waist bending has been studied showing numbness as another discomfort. Again, the length of time correlates with the moderation of severity. In studies, the groups with backache sat for longer periods without interruption and had a more flexed relaxed sitting posture. Pain in different body parts was related to different ergonomic risk factors while at work/hunting, namely bending and twisting of the waist. These findings validate McKenzie's concept of a postural syndrome that occurs with long periods of sitting. This time the hunter has a higher risk for pain and musculoskeletal discomfort while being confined in the tree stand.

Third, there are the neurological issues associated with sitting. There are studies supporting what is called the neurovascular compression syndrome. This is where sitting or lying on an affected side provoked pain caused by painful vascular compression of the sciatic nerve caused by gluteal varicosities. Now, that should make you want to wiggle if nothing else will. Sitting is a major factor in pressure ulcer development. However, most people will not be stationary for that long of a period of time while hunting. Nevertheless, it makes us more aware of pressure area management demonstrating how correct positioning and providing optimum seating equipment can help to reduce the risk of pressure ulcer management.

In summary, we should be driven to find comfort to anyone who sits for a long period of time such as truck drivers, desk workers, hunters, or anyone confined to a wheelchair to help prevent the health risks mention above. As a reminder, most hunters are greater that forty years of age and not all are in top physical condition, placing them in a higher risk category for DVTs and VTE, musculoskeletal discomfort, and nerve compression. So my advice other that exercise and massage of the lower extremities at regular intervals, is to provide an alternative with comfort which decreases compression of the gluteal area and helps decrease compression of nerves and blood vessels. I find that to be with the HUNT COMFORT seat cushions.

God bless,

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