"Always pray to have eyes that see the best, a heart that forgives the worst, a mind that forgives the bad and a soul that never loses faith."
- **Author unknown**

All you have to do is turn on the news and you'll see that things are pretty crazy right now. We can't control what other people do and what's happening around us, but we can control how we react to it. Outside events are stressing out a lot of people, but we have to rise above it all and be mindful that we will have more peace and health if we just do what this quote suggests. Probably the best thing we can do for ourselves right now is turn off the TV, put down the newspaper and get out in nature and spend time with positive people. More importantly, stop sitting around doing nothing and get moving. Trust me, you'll be glad that you did.

Yours in health,

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Get Up and Move!

Many of us are working from home these days, which means we may not be as active as we once were. We're not commuting to work, walking around an office or having the social interactions of just a few months ago. Sadly, this has made many of us too sedentary. For me, it's been important maintain my routine of working out when I get up in the morning. It takes discipline, but it also helps that I enjoy it. Many people don't, which makes it more difficult to get motivated. On top of that, many of us still make our living in a job in which all we do is sit. It'll probably surprise you to learn that the amount of time we sit is actually linked to higher death rates. But research also reveals that simply standing more isn't the answer either. While standing is certainly better than sitting, the goal should really be MOVEMENT. Just standing for long periods of time without moving can cause its own issues that I'm not going to get into now.

Our bodies can suffer a number of negative effects from sitting all day. Here are just a few:
- "Tech neck." This is the result of looking at a computer for a good part of the day. We tend to extend our head and neck forward, which puts strain on our neck and shoulders.
- Weak abdominals and glutes
- Tight hip flexors and pectoral muscles
- Rounded shoulders

I discovered a study that included over a million people, ages 18-64, which found that we need to sit less than 7.5 hours daily to avoid an increased risk of death. That's pretty frightening when you consider that most people with desk jobs probably sit longer than that. Then they sit down to have dinner and then take another seat when they want to relax and watch tv or read. So what's a person to do? Here are a few suggestions.

Set an alarm. A study from Columbia University suggested that people shouldn't sit for more than 29 minutes without a break. Researchers reviewed data from nearly 8,000 men and women older than 45 who wore accelerometers. This is essentially a device that measures movement (acceleration) and vibration. The study found that those who got up at least every 30 minutes had the lowest risk of death. So the bottom line is, it really doesn't matter what you do, as long as you get up out of your chair and do something. Go to the kitchen to fill up your glass of water. Walk up and down the steps a few times. Use a bathroom that's on a different level in your house. It's easy to get so caught up in work that we lose track of time and before we know it, three hours have gone by and we haven't moved. An alarm that goes off every 30 minutes will remind us it's time to get up and move on a regular basis.

Take an exercise break. When your alarm sounds, get up and do something, anything. Here are a couple suggestions: Do 10 jumping jacks, 10 squats and then 10 lunges. The next break, walk up and down your stairs a couple of times. Then on your next break, do 10 pushups, 10 dips, 10 overhead presses and 20 abdominal crunches. The idea is, every 30 minutes, do something different to activate different parts of your body. Over time, you can work on increasing the number of repetitions for each exercise. But the important thing is to get up and move….do SOMETHING.

This may seem silly, but it can definitely turn into a habit….and a good one at that. Here are some of the problems that can arise if you're too sedentary:

- You can develop poor pulmonary function. When you sit, you tend to slouch. Slouching restricts the movement of your diaphragm, which limits lung volume and ultimately makes your respiratory muscles weak.
- You can develop poor circulation. If you don't move around enough, your blood vessels can develop less elasticity, your blood can start to pool and your risk of blood clots can increase. This can lead to a stroke.
- You can develop stiff muscles and joints. Our muscles get stiff when we're inactive because the muscle fibers shorten. Because there's less hyaluronic acid, which is needed to lubricate our joints, we feel stiff and uncomfortable.
- You can develop a higher risk of osteoporosis. When you don't move around enough, your body's level of growth hormone is reduced, which can hinder muscle and bone development.
- You can gain weight. This is everyone's worst nightmare. When you're inactive, it can not only lead to you putting on weight, but it can negatively impact your metabolism (which can contribute to weight gain) and hinder muscle development.
- Your sleep can be negatively impacted. Lack of exercise can lead to poor melatonin production, which can affect your ability to get a good night's sleep. This then makes you more tired and less productive during the day.

Look, I get it. Sitting is a necessary evil, but we have to make an effort to decrease the negative impact it has on our health. My suggestion is to break up the amount of time you sit with some type of movement, any movement, preferably of different levels of intensity, every 30 minutes. The important thing is that you move….even if it's only for a minute or two at a time. Over the course of an entire day, try to get AT LEAST 30 minutes of some type of movement. Yes, I sit a lot, but I also work out in the morning, take many breaks during the day and often go for a walk before or after dinner to clear my head.

You can even do something as simple as sit in your chair, keep your back straight and lift your left arm and reach it to the sky in a diagonal movement to feel a good stretch in your side. Then repeat that same movement with the right arm. Another thing you can do from the sitting position is to stand, then start to sit back down, but don't quite sit all the way down. Instead, hover just over the chair, without making contact and hold that position for at least 10 seconds. Then stand back up. This exercise will activate your lower body and your core.

If you need more suggestions, be sure to reach out. But please, GET UP AND MOVE!

Have a wonderful month.