



## Up and at 'em!

**Welcome to PhysioBiz, with healthcare advice and information you can trust and rely on, brought to you by the South African Society of Physiotherapy!**

2020 has been like a cunning thriller series with endless plot twists, and to be frank, it's hard to predict what the finale will be like. Will we get a 'second wave' of COVID-19, as countries in the global North have? And if we do, will it be milder?

No-one knows, and prediction has turned out to be a dicey art (pardon the pun).

But we can look back and assess what's happened in this pandemic. A recent study looked at the impact on college faculty, administrators and students of studying, teaching or working from home, and found that "participants reported nearly eight hours more sitting per week after transitioning from face-to-face classes to remote learning".

Sitting more? That's not good news for your health – or your immune system. "Dr. Alex Wadley, of the University of Birmingham, says: "The key is to keep moving. The more we move, the more our immune cells move too. Being active and exercising triggers immune cells to circulate the body and detect problems, such as viruses. The fitter we are, the stronger our immune response will be against SARS-CoV-2."

Exercise – not just formal gym sessions, running or playing tennis, but any form of movement – is a powerful immune system booster. "A number of scientists characterise COVID-19 as an inflammatory disease," says South African Society of Physiotherapy President Rogier van Bever Donker. "Exercise is anti-inflammatory, so you can think of regular exercise as insurance, an action you can take to arm yourself against this disease and many others."

But you are sitting more, aren't you? So what can you do to be more active?

- Walk and talk. Smart phones are wonderful things; you don't have to be sitting down to use them! When the phone rings and you have to take the call – or if you get engaged in a What's app text conversation – get up and walk into another room, go outside, walk around the yard. Every extra step counts.
- Take a break. The SASP has been promoting 'Brain Breaks' for learners and workers, brief bursts of physical activity, because this not only ups your movement for the day, but it also refreshes and wakes up your brain. Some ideas for a brain break:
  - Draw a hopscotch game in washable chalk on a convenient surface such as a driveway. Every couple of hours, go and play a game.
  - Do you have room in or out of your house to swing a skipping rope? Hone your skipping skills with a few minutes of skipping a couple of times a day.
  - While you're waiting for a kettle to boil or a pot of tea to brew, turn on some favourite music and dance for three minutes.
  - Draw up a list of physical tasks that you can do in ten to fifteen minutes – replacing the screws in a door latch; washing the bedroom windows, mopping the kitchen floor. It's all good movement, and you'll kill two birds with one stone!

Start now, and you'll not only be ready to face whatever comes next, you'll also be fitter, more toned, more agile, and more able to enjoy the summer's sunny days!

If you have any pain issues or musculoskeletal problems, consult your physiotherapist about being active safely. Find a physiotherapist at [www.saphysio.co.za](http://www.saphysio.co.za).

#### Reference:

<https://www.enca.com/news/health-minister-warn-sa-second-wave>

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