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One Quarter Have Sought Medical Treatment for Aches and Pains Caused by Their Work Environment



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Three out of Four Full-Time Employees of Large Companies Wish They Didn't Spend Most of Their Working Hours Sitting

One Quarter Have Sought Medical Treatment for Aches and Pains Caused by Their Work Environment

New York, NY – Full-time employees of large companies in the United States or more spend on average two-thirds of their working hours in a sitting position, according to a new study conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Ergotron. On average, full-time employees of companies with 1,000 or more employees report spending an average of 21 hours per week seated at a desk, nearly three hours per week seated in meetings and four hours per week seated working at home – a total of 28 hours out of an average workweek of 42 hours, or close to 7 hours on a typical work day. The study also found that full-time workers at large companies spend an average of 25 working hours each week facing a computer or a mobile device, or about 6 hours on a typical work day.

- Female employees tend to spend more time each week working in front of a computer or via mobile device than do men (27 hours vs. 23 hours, on average).
- College graduates (30 hours) and those with a household income of \$75,000 or more (29 hours) are among those who tend to spend the most time in front of a computer for work.

Though many employees work in a sedentary environment, three quarters (73%) say that they do not like spending so much time sitting at work. This is particularly true among employees with a college degree (78%), those with a household income of \$75,000 or more (78%), those under 35 (77%), and those residing in the Northeast (77%). Just over a quarter (27%) say that they are content with the amount of time that they spend sitting at work.

Rather, many would prefer having more options when it comes to their work environment. Two thirds (67%) agree – including 25% who *strongly* agree – that they wish their employer offered workstations or desks that could be adjusted so that they could work either seated or standing. However, a third (33%) disagree.

- Women are more likely than men to wish they had this type of workstation available to them (71% vs. 64%).
- Those who spend at least ten hours per week in front of a computer are more likely than those who spend less time to say that they'd like to have the option of having an adjustable workstation (69% vs. 60%).

Additionally, six in ten full-time workers surveyed (60%) feel that they would be more productive if they had the option to work seated or standing.



- Younger employees (those under 35) are more likely than those who are 55 or older to feel that having this option would increase their productivity (64% vs. 54%).
- More than eight in ten employees who wish that their employer would offer these workstations (81%) feel that they would work more productively.

Not only could this option increase productivity, but it could also decrease the prevalence of work-related health problems, as many say that their workplace/office computing environment has caused discomfort (such as back-aches, neck aches, stiffness, pain, etc.) to the point that they sought medical care. A quarter (24%) report they have sought holistic or professional medical care (such as a doctor, chiropractor, physical therapist, etc.) to alleviate discomfort related to their work environment.

- Women are more likely than men to say that they have sought medical care due to discomforts caused by their working environment (27% vs. 21%).
- Those who tend to spend more time working in front of a computer or via mobile device are more likely to say that they have received medical treatment. While just 14% of those who spend under 10 hours of their work week in front of a computer say that they have needed medical attention, twice as many (28%) of those who spend at least 30 hours per week working at a computer say the same.

Among those who have sought medical care, over half are doing so currently, often spending several hours per month getting care. Though one in five (21%) say that they spend only about an hour each month seeking this medical care, a similar proportion (20%) spend upwards of three hours per month. Just under half (45%) say that they have sought medical treatment for discomforts caused by their workplace environment in the past, but that they are not doing so now.

Those who have sought medical care for work-related health concerns are much more interested in having adjustable workstations. Eight in ten (82%) wish that their employer offered these desks compared to 62% of those who have not gotten the help of a medical professional. Likewise, they are also more likely to feel that these desks would increase their productivity (71% vs. 56%).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted August 3-10, 2010. For the survey, a national sample of 1,007 adults aged 18 and older who are currently employed full-time at a company with 1,000 employees or more from Ipsos' U.S. online panel were interviewed online. Weighting was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults employed full time at a company with 1,000 employees in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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