

Will college students stand between classes? A feasibility study of standing work stations in university hallways

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It is clear that exercise promotes health, and its opposite “sedentary behavior, particularly extended sitting” is associated with poor health related outcomes. Strategies to reduce extended sitting include the use of standing (or adjustable height) workstations. Research studying the use and effects of standing workstations have primarily been conducted in worksite and K-12 school settings. Little research has explored their feasibility in college settings. The purpose of this study was to examine university student use and perceptions of hallway standing work stations. Standing work stations (with laptop and cell phone charging capability) were installed in a hallway near classrooms. Emails providing information about the workstations and encouraging their use were sent to students enrolled in classes near the stations as well as those pursuing degrees in the department housed in the building. Students who used the stations were asked to log their use using a QR code. Data on use of the stations was collected for 8 weeks. Students who logged use of the stations were sent a follow-up survey. Logged use of the stations averaged 14.75 instances per week (range = 9 to 32 per week), primarily between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. A total of 51 students registered use of the stations, most of whom were enrolled in one or more classes near the stations. Slightly over 12% of students enrolled in nearby classes logged use of the stations at least once. Post-study survey responses indicated typical station use length was 15 to 45 minutes, and 95% of users liked the stations and desired more across campus. Creating standing work stations in hallways was an inexpensive and space-efficient strategy to change the university environment to create opportunities to reduce sitting behavior. Combined with email and visual prompts, many students chose to stand and engage in work between classes.