

The Prevalence of Physical Inactivity and Low Back Pain in Sedentary Office Employees: A Survey Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Low back pain (LBP) is an increasingly common chronic condition and self-perceived disability that full-time sedentary employees are at risk of being exposed to. Sedentary employees are paid workers who fulfill all or most of their occupational duties seated. Currently, there is very little research available that discusses how physical inactivity affects LBP in sedentary office employees. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to: (1) determine the prevalence of LBP pain among sedentary office employees, (2) identify the number of sedentary employees who meet the current physical activity guidelines outlined by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and mirroring Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, and (3) to determine the prevalence of LBP amongst physical activity habits in the surveyed population. **METHODS:** One hundred sixty-four participants completed the 36-question survey. Survey questions assessed past injuries, working history, chair type, exercise history and training frequency, sedentary habits, and pain prevalence and management. **RESULTS:** The survey found 73.7% of participants experience some level of LBP when seated at work. Additionally, 32.3% of participants were inactive, 57.9% of participants were insufficiently active, 7.9% of participants were active and 1.8% of participants were highly active in accordance with the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Sixty-six participants reported engaging in resistance training with 63.6% reporting LBP. Ninety-five participants reported engaging in aerobic activity with 75.7% reporting LBP. Eighty-nine participants reported engaging in core training with 70.7% reporting LBP. **CONCLUSION:** The majority of sedentary office employees reported LBP. Additionally, only ~10% of survey respondents met or exceeded ACSM's Physical Activity Guidelines and LBP was still prevalent in most participants despite their engagement in physical activity.