*The Work**Life** Coach presents:*

How to Boost Energy, Mood & Motivation *While at Work*

by **Leanne Spencer**

According to a 2021 NHS England Digital survey, only **20% of working adults reported being very physically active at work**. For many of us, sitting at a desk is our reality for much of the working day, whether that's within an office building or at a home office. Many of us don't move often enough, and this can have a detrimental effect on our energy, mood and motivation. And let's face it, everything is downstream of energy, mood and motivation. We can't do our best work if we we're struggling to feel energised.

Benefits of regular movement

One of the main benefits of getting a little bit of **movement into the body** is that it **gets blood flowing through the limbs and into the brain**. This is great for sharpening you up before going into a meeting for example, or perhaps after a prolonged period of sitting or a long drive (and if you are driving for a long time, pulling in to move your body can also boost alertness). **Movement encourages the flow of blood to the brain, and this can boost creativity, productivity and performance.**

Above all, it's not good for us to be in the same position without moving for any length of time. One of the main reasons for this is that when we sit for long periods, the large muscles in our bodies are not using glucose (the body's main energy source). This can cause blood sugar levels to rise, triggering the release of insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar. Over time, this can cause the body to become less sensitive to insulin. That resistance to insulin promotes inflammation, a key contributor in the build-up of fatty plaque inside our arteries. Studies have also linked long periods of non-interrupted sitting to increased risk of heart disease and other health issues.

Long periods of non-interrupted sitting can increase the risk of heart disease and other health issues

Introducing Movement snacking

A movement snack is where you grab a little bit of movement wherever you can, in the same way you might reach for a snack from the fridge. They're bite-sized pieces of movement to pepper through the day. Movement snacks aren't structured workouts, or the exercise we might do as part of our regular routine. They're about breaking up long periods of sitting with short, regular pockets of movement, even for as little as a minute at a time. **Here are a few examples of movement snacks you could try.**

When driving:

Use your stops for petrol or at a shop as an opportunity to do a few movement snacks. Or park further from the entrance than you need to, so you have an opportunity to walk for a distance, getting the blood flowing and your limbs mobilised.

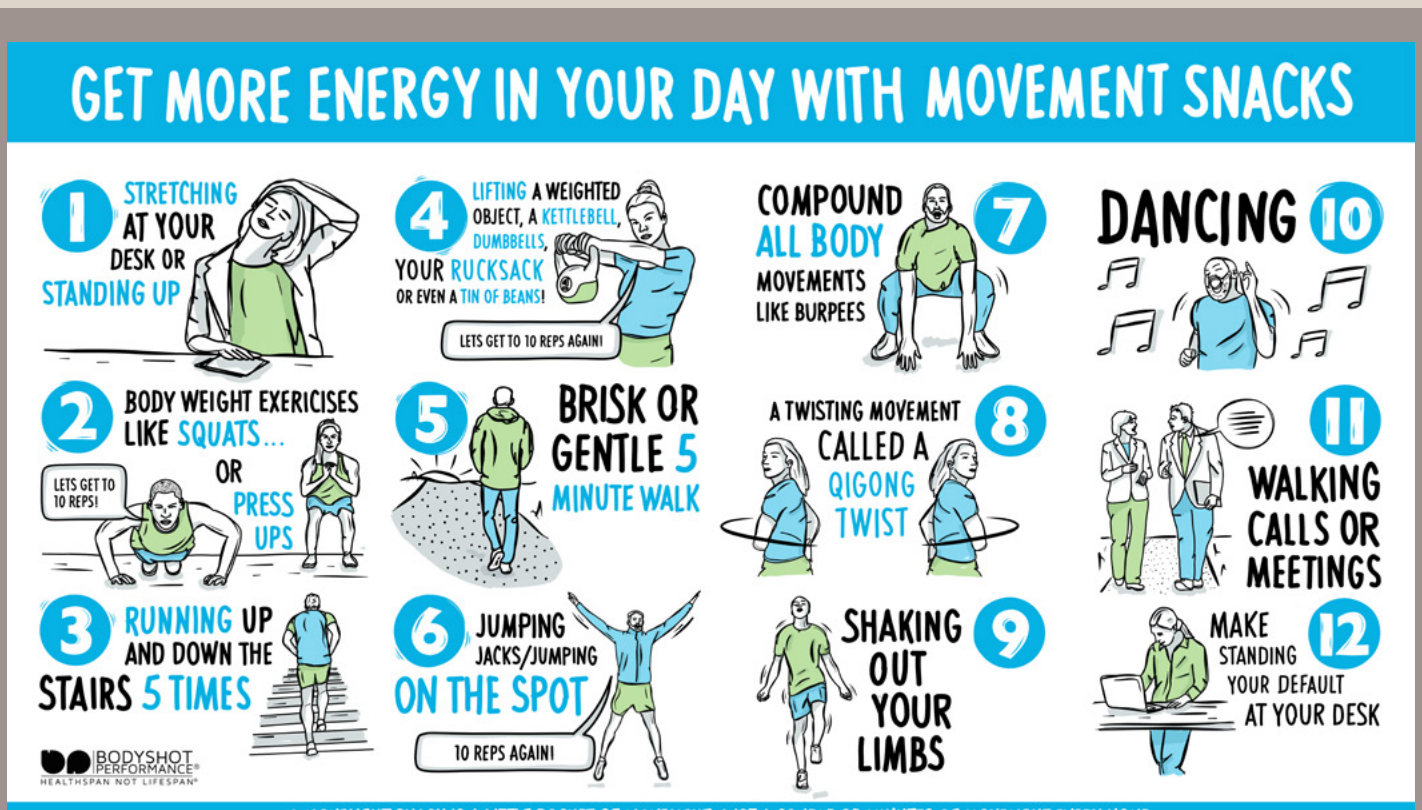
When standing:

Try calf raises – raise up and down on the balls of your feet. Or take the stairs rather than the lift or escalator.

When sitting:

Squeezing your abs or your glutes can be done wherever you are. Flex your stomach muscles, rest for a few seconds then repeat. Then squeeze your glutes and release. Using a sit-stand desk or workstation is another great way to introduce movement.

Try doing some torso twists. Engage your core and twist your upper body to one side, hold and then twist the other way. By choosing to stand up and do this, you get the benefit of using your balance and core musculature to keep you stable.



Exercise doesn't have to be one big block

Meaningful and efficient forms of exercise don't need to be done in one big block. It certainly doesn't need to be an hour done at some point during the day. It's most effective when it's blended with movement, and it's super-effective when you have lots of little spikes of daily life movement throughout the day.

Make it personal

It's completely up to you what you do and what is possible for you depending on your fitness levels, mobility and the space around you. Aim for about 60 seconds of movement every hour or two. You can choose what type of movement it is, and where and when you do it. Vary it up, try a few different things, and see what works best for you.