

[IMAGE]

The Key to Preserving Muscle?

By Editorial Staff

We lose muscle mass as we age, pure and simple. In fact, there's a name for it: *sarcopenia*, and it starts earlier in life than you might think – 3-8 percent loss per decade after age 30. And once you celebrate your 60th birthday, the rate of decline accelerates.

Preserving muscle is important from a health perspective because low muscle mass means more weakness and mobility issues, which can increase fall / fracture risk. Depending on your age, a fall / fracture can be a serious health complication; in fact, falls are the #1 cause of death in adults over the age of 65, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

So, what's the key to preserving muscle mass? According to new research, it could be as simple as incorporating more activity breaks into your day after eating, especially if you're a chronic sitter due to a desk job ... or just a sedentary lifestyle. Study participants spent nearly eight hours sitting, interrupted every half hour by short episodes of walking (two minutes per break) or body-weight squatting (15 repetitions per break). Doing so appeared to increase the efficiency of dietary amino acids, which are utilized to synthesize muscle protein.

office exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark In other words, periodic activity (which the researchers aptly called "activity snacks") improved the body's ability to build muscle, particularly after a meal, when dietary protein synthesis occurs. Findings appear in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*. If you're a chronic sitter, schedule periodic "activity snacks" throughout the day on your smartphone. The older you get, the more you – and your muscles – will appreciate it.

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