



# STUDENT'S SEDENTARY HABITS

## *A Research Study*

### PARTNERS

- This project was largely conducted by the MoveWell and ResearchWell pod teams, with the help of multiple MPH Graduate Students.
- The Sedentary Habits Survey was administered by the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) and the data was analyzed by Linghui Jiang, an MPH Graduate Student.
- The focus groups were conducted by MoveWell Graduate Student Researchers Ellen Gerdes and Shweta Saraswat.
- The key informant interviews were conducted by Gerdes, Leung, Saraswat, and Jordan Wong.
- Coding was completed by MoveWell Graduate Student Researcher Vanessa Perez and ResearchWell Graduate Student Researcher Anika Akhter.

### OVERVIEW

In 2015-2016, the MoveWell Pod of the UCLA Healthy Campus Initiative (HCI), envisioned and supported by Jane and Terry Semel, launched a study to learn more about the sedentary habits of UCLA undergraduate and graduate students in class, at home, and at work. We employed a mixed-methods approach that consisted of an online quantitative survey with undergraduate, graduate, and professional students; qualitative interviews with faculty; and focus groups with students. This study is IRB approved. The survey was administered to 5,000 randomly selected students (2,500 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate/professional students) of which 488 responded. Eight focus group sessions were conducted with a total of 66 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Finally, nine key informant interviews were completed with faculty to learn more about the classroom culture pertaining to movement. During the summer of 2016, transcripts from the faculty key informant interviews and the student focus groups were coded and analyzed by members of the ResearchWell and MoveWell teams. A manuscript is being developed for a peer-reviewed journal. All stages of research were conducted under the guidance of Dr. Burton Cowgill.



### PROJECT DETAILS

The project's goal was to collect empirical information about UCLA students' sedentary habits in order inform students and faculty about the risks of prolonged sitting and to identify potential strategies to intervene and reduce prolonged

bouts of sedentary behavior. Move Well aims to utilize this research in 2017-2018 academic year to promote interventions that encourage movement across campus classrooms and students' study habits. This research study was funded directly by HCI and involves a close partnership with the MoveWell and ResearchWell pods.



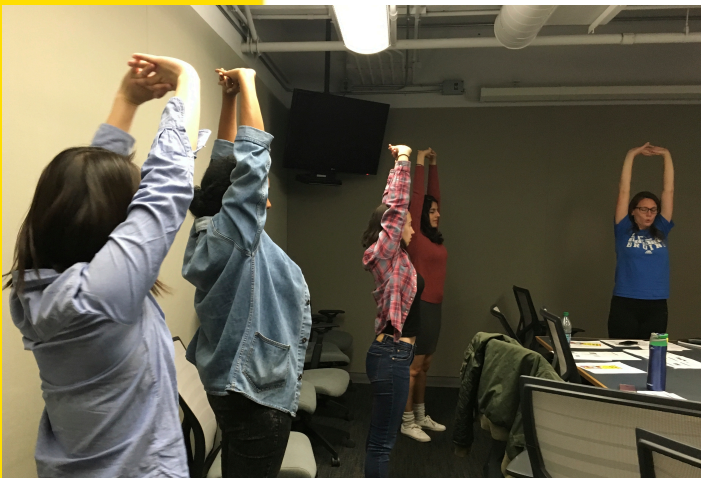


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### RESOURCES

This study relied on the assistance of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO), which sends surveys out to students. To do a similar project on campus, a team would need IRB research approval as well as incentives for the focus groups. Software for social science coding also helped expedite the data analysis process.



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### DATA SNAPSHOT

- Preliminary findings suggest that overall, students spend an average length of nearly 10 hours of daily continuous sitting time (combined class, work, and transportation); with weekday in-class sitting of 4 to 5 hours per day, and most having classes 5 days per week (38.9%).
- Too much sitting in class was a major concern for almost all participants. Some students sat up to three hours at a time with no break during the class (13.2%).
- UCLA students tend to sit in classrooms for 1-1.5 hours without a break and often do not take a break from sitting even when it is offered.
- The classroom's built environment constraints affect students' desire to stand and the instructor's ability to use pedagogy that promotes non-sedentary learning.

- Instructors and students alike do support pedagogy that integrates some standing or movement into the class.
- An exercise break is generally supported if led by the instructor or a video, as long as it is optional.
- Students tend not to stand up and stretch due to feelings that this might communicate boredom or rudeness to the instructor (social acceptability issues).

### PROCESS INSIGHT

• We adapted a workplace-sitting instrument for the academic setting and operationalized the sitting measures through an online survey tool. Some survey participants had trouble completing the sitting items and overestimated the amount of time they engaged in sitting on an average weekday and weekend day. We would use a different survey tool (e.g., Survey Monkey) and modify the presentation of the sitting items for more clarity.

- We learned the importance of incentivizing focus groups and interviews. We bought Amazon gift cards and there was some restriction on the dollar amount and required more information about the students.
- We didn't know when we started quite how long it would take to get to the stage of being able to implement the research, because we underestimated the amount of time it would take for transcription, coding, and analysis. We are excited for this step next year.

