

Brampton: 220 Wexford Road Unit 2 Brampton, ON L6Z-4N7  
Ph: (905) 840-WELL Fax: (905) 840 -LIFE  
www.drjustineblainey.com  
www.blaineywellness.com

# Can Standing Promote Weight Loss, and How Much Movement Does It Take to Burn Off Your Favorite Junk Food?

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## The Impact of Movement on Calorie Burning

That said, movement is surely part of the long-term answer. Physical movement requires more energy to be used up than sitting or lying down. The question is, how much movement do you need? A recent study evaluated the number of calories burned by different office activities. Seventy-four normal weight volunteers in their mid-20s were recruited and randomly assigned to one of four activity groups:

1. Sitting down, typing on a computer for 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of standing still, making an effort to move and fidget as little as possible
2. Sitting down, watching a television screen for 15 minutes, followed by a 15-minute stroll on a treadmill
3. Standing up for 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of sitting
4. Walking on a treadmill for 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of sitting

The volunteers all wore equipment that measured how many calories they were burning. The results showed that:

- Sitting burns about 20 calories per 15 minutes, regardless of whether you're actively typing or not
- Standing up burns about 22 calories per 15 minutes, or an additional eight to nine calories more per hour compared to sitting down
- Walking burns nearly three times more calories than sitting or standing, with an hour of walking resulting in an additional 130 calories being burned each day

These results suggest that if you're trying to lose weight, standing up may not be enough. Walking more, on the other hand, could have a slight impact, provided you don't sabotage it with poor dietary choices.

## Standing Has Other Important Health Benefits

While standing still may have a negligible impact on the number of calories you burn,

standing does increase the likelihood you'll move more in general. Standing also provides biological benefits besides calorie burning that make it well worth your consideration. As explained by Dr. James A. Levine, co-director of the Arizona State University Obesity Solutions and author of the book "Get Up!: Why Your Chair Is Killing You and What You Can Do About It," standing up triggers a number of beneficial molecular cascades. For example, within 90 seconds of standing up, the muscular and cellular systems that process blood sugar, triglycerides, and cholesterol — which are mediated by insulin — are activated. All of these molecular effects are triggered by carrying your own bodyweight. These cellular mechanisms are also responsible for pushing fuel into your cells and, if done regularly, will radically decrease your risk of diabetes.

## What Does It Take to Burn Off That Junk Food?

To "work off" a single McDonald's Big Mac, men would have to do more than 40 minutes of cardio; women would have to go a bit longer, just over 50 minutes. If you had a large French fries with that, tack on *another* 40 minutes of cardio for men and 48 minutes for women. If you had a can of soda, add yet another 12 to 14 minutes of cardio for men and women respectively. So to "neutralize" the calories in this one meal, which is a common combo, would require at least 1 1/2 hours of moderate to intense exercise.

## Calories Are Not Created Equal

Weight gain can be further aggravated by eating lots of metabolically harmful calories. What falls under this category? Primarily net carbs, which is the total carbohydrates minus fiber. For optimal health and disease prevention, I recommend keeping your net carbs below 40 or 50 grams per day. Primary culprits include all forms of sugar, as well as most grains, which turn into sugar in your body.

The dogmatic belief that "a calorie is a calorie" has done much to contribute to the ever-worsening health of the Western world. It's one of the first things dieticians learn in school, and it's completely false. Calories are *not* created equal. The *source* of the calories makes all the difference in the world. Groundbreaking research by Dr. Robert Lustig shows that calories from processed fructose are of particular concern.

According to Lustig, fructose is "isocaloric but not isometabolic." What this means is that *identical calorie counts* from fructose and glucose, fructose and protein, or fructose and fat, will cause *entirely different metabolic effects*. One of the reasons for this is due to the fact that different nutrients provoke different hormonal responses, and those hormonal responses determine how much fat your body will accumulate and hold on to.

Research shows that calories gleaned from bread, refined sugars and processed foods

promote overeating, whereas calories from whole vegetables, protein and fiber decrease hunger. According to a 2015 meta-review<sup>9</sup> published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings, once you reach 18 percent of your daily calories from added sugar, there's a two-fold increase in metabolic harm that promotes pre-diabetes and diabetes.