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Taking it to the Streets - Walking Meetings Are All The Rage

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Walking strategy session with [Rochelle de Goias](#), Founder and Executive Director of [GEM](#)

It's a sitting crisis. The offices we've imprisoned ourselves in are increasing our healthcare costs and taking a toll on our productivity and mental health.

"After an hour or more of sitting," Steve Lohr [writes](#) in *The New York Times*, "the production of enzymes that burn fat in the body declines by as much as 90 percent. Extended sitting.....slows the body's metabolism of glucose and lowers the levels of good (HDL) cholesterol in the blood. Those are risk factors toward developing heart disease and Type 2 diabetes."

"Your job is killing you," Shoshana Berger [writes](#) in *Wired Magazine*. "If you sit at a desk for more than four hours a day, you increase your risk of death from any cause by nearly 50 percent and boost your risk of heart problems by 125 percent."

In his acclaimed novel *Generation X*, [Douglas Coupland](#) dubbed office cubicles "the Veal-Fattening Pen." It doesn't have to be that way. In a *Harvard Business Review* [article](#) titled "To Stand or to Sit at Work: An Auto-Analytics Experiment," Susy Jackson tells how she began sitting on an exercise ball to combat her incipient case of "spam butt." Soon after, the rest of her office followed suit. "While I was sitting on the yoga ball," she relates, "heads started popping up and staying up. Standing desks were all the rage."

I've seen it myself when I work out of *The Atlantic's* Washington, D.C. offices in the Watergate building. There are beautiful views of the Potomac outside the windows, but there is something interesting to look at inside as well. Writers and editors are working standing up, with music stands or podiums configured to hold their laptops, or they are sitting, rolling, or shifting around on exercise balls to strengthen their cores and keep their muscles working.

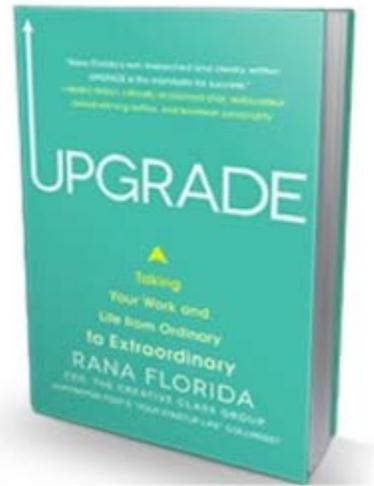
As workers are increasingly taking matters in their own hands, treadmill desks have emerged as a fad. But you don't have to invest in costly equipment to reverse the "sitting crisis." Think how much of your time you spend in meetings. Why not take them out of the conference room and out into the streets? I've been doing that for years. My colleagues and I strategize while climbing hills; we hash out HR issues while running up and down stairs, and we brainstorm while we're cooling down. And when we do return to our desks, we have a fresh new perspective and better focus.

We all need to change our mindset and get up off our behinds. Whether your office is in a suburban industrial park, an urban skyscraper, or in your own home, it's slowly but surely killing you.

Be sure to schedule your next meeting as a walking one.

As adapted and edited from the best-selling book, [Upgrade](#).

Rana Florida is the author of the best-selling book [Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary.](#)



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