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# Stand up and be counted

Standing desks have become all the rage. **Alexandra Cain** looks at the benefits of being on your feet more often.

Australia's weirdest tax deduction, standing desks, are increasingly being adopted by businesses that wish to meet their duty of care to provide healthy workspaces for their staff. They are also a great option for enterprises looking to make business purchases and increase the value of their tax deductions this financial year.

With it now acknowledged that too much sedentary activity increases the risk of diseases such as cancer, stroke and heart attacks, more and more businesses are looking into giving their staff the opportunity to stand while they work.

So what are some of the standing desk options available in Australia?

James Moore from ZestDesk, which sells standing desks, explains they fall in to two categories: regular desks whose height can be adjusted and solutions that turn regular tables into standing desks.

"The choice between the two comes down to the desired fit with current office furniture and price. The trend has been away from the manual "crank up" desks towards the electronic versions, mainly because of the ease of use," he says.

Moore notes that as demand and competition have increased over the last couple of years, prices have reduced significantly. "Consumers can now purchase lower-end electric adjustable standing desks for around \$800. With Officeworks and other retailers entering the market this year businesses can expect prices to

continue to drop."

Tim Prevade, commercial activities leader at IKEA Australia, says the business will be releasing its BEKANT (Swedish for "friend") sit/stand desk with electric height adjustment in 2016.

"This is a highly anticipated product and one which responds to an understanding of the need for improved working environments and healthier desk options."

It also offers a laptop stand station, designed to create a place for everything that is connected to the internet, such as computers and mobile phones, as well as provide health benefits associated with standing up while working.

Interestingly, IKEA sales data from the last 12 months suggests 60 per cent of those buying standing laptop stations are women.

Blake Hopper is the operations manager for Domina General Insurance Brokers.

The tax breaks announced at the federal budget prompted him to invest in standing desks for the business.

"We take staff welfare and job satisfaction very seriously and enjoyed the opportunity to reward our staff with new and exciting additions in the office," he says.

After much research, Hopper decided to buy Varidesk standing desks for the office staff.

"They impressed us with their ease of transition between sitting and standing, their elegant lightweight design and their portable capability."

In terms of return on investment, the desks give staff the option to sit or stand, leading to greater job satisfaction.

"Staff are no longer slumped over all day on a chair at their desk. The chance to stand and work gives staff more energy, particularly late in the afternoon.

"We have noticed a sharp rise in

productivity levels, which we attribute to their ability to stand and stay alert," says Hopper.

"Staff are happier, healthier and love talking about the desks to their clients when they come in. A happy team leads to improved moral, greater job satisfaction and better quality of work.

"Our new desks, as well as our upgraded kitchen facilities we've recently put in, all contribute to positive return on investment.

"We would not have made these investments without the new tax break write-off," he adds.



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**Blake Hopper likes the versatility of standing desks. Photo: Adam McLean**

