

# Sit-Stand Desks

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Sit-stand desks -- also called height-adjustable desks -- allow users to alternate between sitting and standing throughout the workday. This simple change in posture has been shown to reduce discomfort, improve energy levels, and support long-term musculoskeletal health. This guide covers every key decision point: adjustment mechanisms, height ranges, weight capacity, stability, programmable controls, cable management, and the choice between full sit-stand desks and desktop converters.

## 1. Health and Productivity Benefits

Prolonged sitting is associated with increased risks of cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and chronic back pain. Sit-stand desks address this by encouraging posture changes throughout the day.

Evidence-based benefits of sit-stand work:

- Reduced lower back pain and discomfort -- alternating postures relieves sustained pressure on lumbar discs and supporting muscles
- Improved circulation -- standing periodically counteracts the circulatory slowdown caused by extended sitting
- Increased energy and alertness -- users consistently report feeling more alert and less fatigued when given the option to stand
- Better posture habits -- the ability to change position reduces the tendency to slouch, which is common during long seated work sessions
- Reduced risk of repetitive strain -- changing wrist and shoulder angles periodically can help reduce the risk of RSI-related discomfort

Ergonomics experts recommend alternating between sitting and standing every 30-60 minutes. A common starting guideline is a 3:1 ratio -- 45 minutes sitting, 15 minutes standing -- adjusting as comfort allows.

## 2. Types of Height Adjustment Mechanisms

The adjustment mechanism is the core differentiator among sit-stand desks. It determines speed, noise level, ease of use, and long-term reliability.

Mechanism	Speed	Noise	Capacity	Best For
Electric - Dual Motor	Fast (1.5"/sec)	Low-Moderate	200-350 lbs	Heavy setups, frequent adjustments
Electric - Single Motor	Moderate (1"/sec)	Moderate	150-220 lbs	Standard setups, budget-conscious
Pneumatic (Gas Spring)	Fast (manual)	Quiet	50-80 lbs	Light setups, converters
Hand Crank	Slow	Silent	100-200 lbs	Infrequent adjustments, no power
Counterbalance Spring	Fast (manual)	Very Quiet	30-60 lbs	Desktop converters

Electric dual-motor systems are the commercial standard. Two motors (one per leg) lift the desk evenly, handle heavier loads, and operate faster than single-motor designs. They are the best choice for workstations with multiple monitors, a desktop computer, and accessories.

Electric single-motor systems use one motor driving both legs through a shared axle or belt. They are quieter in some designs but slower and typically have lower weight capacity.

Pneumatic (gas spring) mechanisms use a compressed gas cylinder to assist with height changes. The user pulls a lever and physically guides the desk up or down. These are common on smaller desks and converters but are not practical for heavy setups.

Hand crank systems require manual rotation of a crank handle to raise or lower the desk. They are inexpensive and require no power, but the slow adjustment speed discourages frequent position changes -- defeating the purpose of a sit-stand desk.

### 3. Height Range Requirements

The height range of a sit-stand desk must accommodate both the shortest and tallest users in your office, in both sitting and standing positions.

Recommended height range: 22" to 48" (desk surface to floor). This range accommodates users from approximately 5'0" to 6'4" in both sitting and standing positions.

User Height	Sitting Desk Height	Standing Desk Height
5'0" - 5'3"	22" - 25"	35" - 38"
5'4" - 5'7"	24" - 26"	37" - 40"
5'8" - 5'11"	25" - 28"	40" - 43"
6'0" - 6'4"	27" - 30"	43" - 48"

Important: The desk height shown above is the surface-to-floor measurement. If using a keyboard tray (which drops the typing surface 1"-2" below the desk surface), factor this into the required range. The goal is for the user's elbows to rest at approximately 90° with wrists in a neutral position.

For offices with a wide range of user heights, prioritize desks with a minimum sitting height of 22"-24" and a maximum standing height of at least 48". Desks with a narrow range (e.g., 28"-46") will not accommodate shorter users in the seated position.

## 4. Weight Capacity and Stability

Weight capacity and stability at standing height are two of the most important -- and most frequently overlooked -- specifications for sit-stand desks.

### Weight Capacity

The rated weight capacity of a sit-stand desk indicates the maximum load the lifting mechanism can handle safely. This includes everything on the desk: monitors, monitor arms, computer tower, keyboard, phone, desk lamp, and any other accessories.

Setup Type	Typical Load	Min Recommended Capacity
Single monitor + laptop	30-50 lbs	150 lbs
Dual monitors + desktop PC	60-90 lbs	200 lbs
Triple monitors + heavy equipment	90-130 lbs	300 lbs

Always choose a desk with capacity well above your current load. This provides headroom for adding equipment later and ensures the motor is not operating at its maximum strain, which extends its lifespan.

### Stability at Standing Height

Stability -- the desk's resistance to wobble and sway when raised to standing height -- is critical. A desk that wobbles at 44" is uncomfortable and causes visible monitor shake during typing.

Factors that improve stability:

- Crossbar or H-frame design connecting the two legs below the desk surface
- Wider leg stance (base width of 40" or more for a 60" desktop)
- Heavier-gauge steel legs (14-gauge or thicker)
- Dual-stage or triple-stage telescoping columns (triple-stage is generally more stable)
- Leveling feet that firmly contact the floor on uneven surfaces

## 5. Surface Size and Workspace

Sit-stand desks are available in a range of surface sizes. The right size depends on the user's equipment, work style, and room constraints.

Surface Size	Workspace	Best For
48" x 24"	Compact	Single monitor, laptop-only setups
48" x 30"	Moderate	Single monitor + keyboard + documents
60" x 30"	Standard	Dual monitors, standard workstation
72" x 30"	Large	Triple monitors or extensive paperwork
L-shaped sit-stand	Maximum	Multi-task users who need corner layout

A 60" x 30" surface is the most popular commercial size. It comfortably accommodates a dual-monitor arm, keyboard, mouse, phone, and a writing area. For users who spread papers or need extra room, the 72" x 30" option is recommended.

Surface depth matters as much as width. A 24"-deep desk pushes the monitor too close for comfortable viewing at arm's length. A 30" depth allows a monitor arm to position the screen at the recommended 20"-26" viewing distance.

## 6. Programmable Features and Controls

Modern electric sit-stand desks include digital control panels with features that improve usability and protect the desk and surrounding furniture.

### Programmable Memory Presets

Memory presets allow the user to save their preferred sitting and standing heights and recall them with a single button press. Most controllers offer 3-4 presets. This feature is essential -- without it, users must hold a button and watch the height display each time they adjust, which discourages regular position changes.

### Anti-Collision Sensors

Anti-collision (also called anti-crush) sensors detect resistance during desk movement and immediately stop and reverse the motor. This prevents damage to chairs, filing cabinets, keyboard trays, or a child or pet that may be under the desk. Look for desks with adjustable sensitivity settings -- overly sensitive sensors may trigger false stops from cable tension.

### Digital Height Display

A built-in LED or LCD display shows the current desk height in inches or centimeters. This helps users find and return to their preferred positions and is useful for shared workstations where multiple users may have different height preferences.

### Sit-Stand Reminders

Some controllers include a timer that reminds the user to change position after a set interval. While not essential, this feature can help users build the sit-stand habit during the first weeks of use.

### Child Lock

A child lock disables the control panel to prevent accidental height changes. This is useful in home offices or environments where unauthorized users may access the controls.

## 7. Cable Management for Height-Adjustable Desks

Cable management is more critical -- and more challenging -- on sit-stand desks than on fixed-height desks. The desk surface moves up to 26" vertically, and all connected cables must accommodate this range of motion without pulling, tangling, or disconnecting.

Cable management solutions for sit-stand desks:

- **Cable spine / cable chain:** A segmented, flexible plastic or metal spine hangs from the underside of the desk to the floor, enclosing cables in a contained path that extends and compresses as the desk moves. This is the most effective solution.
- **Cable tray:** A horizontal tray mounted under the desk surface holds power strips, adapters, and excess cable slack. Keeps cables off the floor and organized.
- **Under-desk power strip:** Mounting the power strip directly under the desk means all connected cables move with the desk surface, eliminating the need for long cable runs to the wall outlet. Only the single power strip cord runs to the floor.
- **Velcro cable wraps:** Reusable Velcro ties bundle cables together neatly inside the tray or spine. Avoid zip ties -- they cannot be adjusted later without cutting.
- **Wireless accessories:** Reducing wired connections (wireless keyboard, mouse, headset) minimizes the number of cables that must flex with desk movement.

When setting up a sit-stand desk for the first time, raise the desk to its maximum height before routing cables. This ensures all cables have adequate slack at full extension. Then lower the desk and verify that cables do not bunch or drag on the floor at sitting height.

## 8. Desk Converters vs. Full Sit-Stand Desks

Desktop converters (also called sit-stand risers) are an alternative to replacing the entire desk. They sit on top of an existing fixed-height desk and raise/lower the keyboard and monitor independently.

Feature	Full Sit-Stand Desk	Desktop Converter
Height range	22" - 48" (full range)	6" - 22" above existing desk
Work surface area	Full desktop (48"-72" wide)	Limited (24"-36" wide)
Weight capacity	150 - 350 lbs	25 - 50 lbs
Stability	High (floor-standing)	Moderate (depends on base desk)
Installation	Replaces existing desk	Sits on existing desk -- no tools
Keyboard position	Moves with full surface	Separate keyboard tray
Dual monitor support	Excellent	Limited (most support one)

### Converter types:

- Z-lift converters use a Z-shaped parallelogram mechanism. They lift straight up and are generally the most stable converter design.
- X-lift converters use a scissor mechanism that moves forward as it rises. This can change the user's viewing distance and is less stable at full height.
- Post-mount converters use a single vertical post with a gas spring. They are compact but support less weight and smaller surfaces.

Full sit-stand desks are the better long-term investment for dedicated workstations. Converters are best suited for temporary setups, tight budgets, or situations where the existing desk furniture cannot be replaced.

## 9. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Buying a desk with insufficient height range -- a range of 28"-46" will not accommodate shorter users sitting or taller users standing. Look for 22"-48" for the widest compatibility.
- Choosing a desk without programmable presets -- if users must hold a button and watch the display every time, they will stop adjusting. Memory presets make sit-stand habitual.
- Ignoring weight capacity -- dual monitors, a desktop PC, and accessories add up quickly. An overloaded motor wears out faster and may fail to lift evenly.
- Overlooking stability at standing height -- always test or verify stability at 44"+ height. Wobble at standing height makes the desk unusable for typing.
- Failing to plan cable management -- cables that are fine at sitting height will pull tight or disconnect at standing height. A cable spine or chain is essential.
- Selecting a hand crank for frequent adjustments -- the slow speed discourages regular position changes, negating the health benefits.
- Choosing a desktop converter when a full desk is needed -- converters offer less surface area, lower capacity, and do not adjust the full desk surface.
- Placing the desk against a wall without rear clearance for cables -- leave 2"-4" between the desk and the wall at all heights.

## 10. Buyer's Checklist

- Determine desk type: full sit-stand desk or desktop converter
- Choose adjustment mechanism: electric dual-motor (recommended), single-motor, pneumatic, or crank
- Verify height range covers all users: minimum 22" sitting to 48" standing
- Confirm weight capacity exceeds your total equipment load by at least 30%
- Test or verify stability at maximum standing height (44"+)
- Select surface size based on equipment needs (60" x 30" is the commercial standard)
- Confirm programmable memory presets (3-4 positions recommended)
- Verify anti-collision sensor is included and sensitivity is adjustable
- Plan cable management: cable spine, under-desk tray, and power strip
- Check crossbar or H-frame design for added stability
- Ensure the desk fits your room with adequate clearance at standing height
- Review warranty terms -- motor and frame should have separate coverage

## 11. Our Sit-Stand Desk Collection

OfficeFurniture2go carries 772 sit-stand and standing height desk configurations -- 644 electronically adjustable and 77 manual models. All backed by our Lifetime Warranty and free nationwide shipping.

### Bush Furniture -- Stratus Collection (Featured Models)

The Stratus Collection from Bush features UL-listed electric motors with a 27" to 46.7" height range. Available in White, Platinum Gray, and Natural Elm finishes.

Model / SKU	Desktop Size	Height Range	Finishes
101-ZBA112 60in Electric w/ Drawers & Modesty Panel	60" x 30"	27" to 46.7"	3 options
101-ZBA108 72in Electric w/ Drawers	72" x 30"	27" to 46.7"	3 options
101-ZBA116 60in Electric w/ Bookcase	60" x 30"	27" to 46.7"	3 options

### PBD Furniture -- Most Popular Sit-Stand Line

PBD Furniture (405 sit-stand models) offers dual-motor 2-stage electric desks in 60in x 30in, 6ft x 30in, and 48in x 24in sizes plus U-shaped and L-shaped sit-stand corner configurations. Available in White, Walnut, Espresso, Gray, Cherry, and Maple finishes. 83 Made in USA options available across PBD's adjustable height line.

### Full Range Overview

Brand	Models	Specialty
PBD Furniture	405	Dual-motor, L-shape, U-shape sit-stand combos
Bush Office Furniture	264	Stratus Collection, electric w/ storage, neutral finishes
Corp Design	42	Commercial-grade adjustable desks
Bestar	13	Ergonomic standalone adjustable desks

OfficeFurniture2go has helped businesses across the country transition to sit-stand workstations for over 30 years. Every height-adjustable desk we offer ships with our Lifetime Warranty and includes nationwide delivery.

Ready to Find the Right Solution?

Contact OfficeFurniture2go.com for expert guidance, nationwide delivery, and our Lifetime Warranty. Our team brings 30+ years of experience to help you make the right choice for your workspace.

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