

# BLUE ZONES

“I find it a lot healthier for me to be someplace where I can go outside in my bare feet.” – James Taylor

## Working from home? Avoid health hazards



Working from home may sound ideal, no long commutes or traffic gridlock, no dress code, no office distractions, greater freedom, and the comfort of being in your own home environment. While it does have its benefits, working from home can have its vulnerabilities when it comes to maintaining physical well-being. GETTY IMAGES

### Sebastien Saitta

Blue Zones Project-Southwest Florida

Since COVID-19 began, more than half the working U.S population moved to a home office, or more likely the living room couch, dining room table or kitchen counter.

Working from home may sound ideal, no long commutes or traffic gridlock, no dress code, no office distractions, greater freedom, and the comfort of being in your own home environment. While it does have its benefits, working from home can have its vulnerabilities when it comes to maintaining physical well-being.

“It seems we’ve traded out the headaches of long commutes and rush hour traffic and replaced it with stress caused by social and professional isolation, and the aches and pains from poor home office ergonomics,” says Megan Greer, Worksite and Policy Lead at Blue Zones Project.

It is estimated that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) have an economic burden in excess of \$150 billion in North America each year.

“All of the sitting of modern life is an outright denial of our true nature,” says Stephen D. Stohler, Doctor of Chiropractic at Fundamental Health Solutions in Naples.

“We spend a lot of our work hours sitting, hunching over our smartphone or computer. All of this time sitting in a slumped position with poor posture puts strain on our neck and back and can significantly affect the muscles and

the body.”

Stohler sees this problem being inflated by the amount of people working from home who do not have a proper desk or chair to use.

“Most furniture is designed to look good more than it is designed to support your spine properly, and most of us focus on comfort when we sit instead of good posture,” he says.

Stohler recommends getting a stand-up desk or if circumstances don’t allow it, then set a timer and get up at least once every hour and walk around for at least five minutes. If you are sitting, it’s important to be conscious of your posture.

Proper office ergonomics helps to avoid injury by keeping the neck, back and torso aligned properly while working. For a full explanation and illustration on proper office ergonomics, visit the National Institutes of Health Office of Research Services website at <https://www.ors.od.nih.gov>.

Movement breaks play a large part in maintaining physical well-being when working from home according to Nino Maggadino NASM CPT- Fitness Instructor at Max Flex Fitness. “When you take a break, move to a different area and stretch versus sitting in place,” says Nino. “I recommend doing some standing hip flexor stretches and if you can do it outside while getting some fresh air, even better.”

Nino also recommends moving naturally by taking a walk while you are stuck on a long call or are in a brainstorm meeting. “Natural movement in-

creases blood flow to the brain and will improve cognitive function and productivity,” he says. “It could also help generate your next great idea!”

Nino adds that excess sitting can slow down metabolism and lead to weight gain that can directly contribute to many other health issues. To help fight this problem, he recommends that you regularly schedule formal exercise into your calendar.

“You are 40 percent more likely to exercise when it is scheduled,” he says. For more fitness tips and exercises from Nino, visit [Fitnesscoachnino.com/programs](https://Fitnesscoachnino.com/programs).

**Blue Zones challenge**  
Starting Sept. 1, we are challenging you to commit to exercising for 30 minutes a day no matter how, when, where or what. This means you can break it up into three, 10-minute sessions, move for 15 minutes in the morning and another 15 at night, or just do 1 four minutes of jumping jacks at the top of every hour during your work day.

Any kind of movement counts! Track your progress on the form that will be provided to you after you register and if you complete the challenge, you’ll be entered to win a free dinner for two at a Blue Zones Approved Restaurant! Visit [30days30minuteschallenge.eventbrite.com](https://30days30minuteschallenge.eventbrite.com) to register.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc. and Blue Zones, LLC, Blue Zones Project is a vital part of Southwest Florida’s well-being improvement initiative that encourages

changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information about Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida, visit [southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com](https://southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com).

### Online Power Nine activity of the week

Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida wants to know how you are living the Power 9, a set of shared principles followed by the longest-lived people.

Each week, we will have a specific Power 9 activity for you to try and share with us.

This week’s Power 9 activity is Move Naturally.

The world’s longest-lived people don’t pump iron, run marathons or join gyms. Instead, they live in environments where movement come naturally.

Are you taking active breaks when working from home, or if you don’t have a stand-up or regular office desk, have you created a way to ensure you are maintaining movement or proper posture while working?

Share with us by commenting or by tagging us on Facebook @Blue Zones Project – Southwest Florida, or you can email us at [bluezonesprojectswfl@sharecare.com](mailto:bluezonesprojectswfl@sharecare.com) to be entered in our prize drawing for a gift card from one of our Blue Zones Project Approved Restaurants.

*Sebastien Saitta is with the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida.*

## Tips for motorists when using roundabouts

### Michelle Avola

Special to Naples Daily News  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

There still seems to be a lot of debate and confusion about navigating roundabouts (like the one on Central Avenue pictured here), and we want to help.

Although there are differences of opinion, modern roundabouts have been deemed a “proven safety counter-measure” by the U.S. Department of Trans-

portation. AARP, the Florida Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and countless municipalities across the country agree, so why is it such a challenge to gain acceptance for roundabouts in Collier County?

Did you know personal injuries and fatalities drop as much as 90% in modern roundabouts as compared to signalized intersections according to the Federal Highway Administration? Round-

abouts naturally slow traffic, reducing crashes and their severity, but because roundabouts can handle 30-50% more traffic, they improve traffic flow and reduce travel times.

Pedestrians have an easier time crossing because they must only watch one direction of traffic at a time. Bicyclists can safely use the road to travel through the roundabout, or they can use the pedestrian crossings if that feels more comfortable.

Many people who feel uncomfortable navigating a roundabout say they are unsure how to drive or ride through them or they don’t think other drivers know how to use roundabouts correctly.

The City of Naples, the Blue Zones Project, Naples Pathways Coalition, and Safe Routes to School have been circulating educational materials to help everyone better understand how to safely

See TIPS, Page 6D