

11 minutes of exercise a day may help counter the effects of sitting

The sweet spot for physical activity and longevity seemed to arrive at about 35 minutes a day of brisk walking or other moderate activities.

Walking for at least 11 minutes a day could lessen the undesirable health consequences of sitting for hours and hours, according to a helpful new study of the ways in which both inactivity and exercise influence how long we live.

The study, which relied on objective data from tens of thousands of people about how they spent their days, found that those who were the most sedentary faced a high risk of dying young, but if people got up and moved, they slashed that threat substantially, even if they did not move much. For most of us, sitting for prolonged periods of time is common, especially now, as we face the dual challenges of COVID-related restrictions and the shortening, chilly days of winter. Recent surveys of people's behaviour since the start of the pandemic indicate that a majority of us are exercising less and sitting more than we were a year ago. Not surprisingly, there could be long-term health consequences from this physical quietude. Multiple past epidemiological studies show links between sitting and mortality. In general, in these studies, couchbound people are far more likely to die prematurely than active people are.

But how active an active person should be if he or she hopes to mitigate the downsides of sitting has remained unclear. If you sit for eight hours at work, for instance, then stroll for half an hour in the evening — meaning you comply with the standard exercise recommendation of about 30 minutes of exercise most days — is that enough movement to undo most of the health risks of too much sitting?

Some past research had suggested the answer is no. A 2016 study involving more than a million people found, instead, that men and women needed to exercise mod-

erately for about 60 to 75 minutes a day in order to diminish the undesirable effects of sitting. That study, though, like most similar, earlier research, asked people to remember how much they had moved or sat, which can be problematic. We tend to be unreliable narrators of our lives, overestimating physical activity and underestimating how much we sit. But if large numbers of people misremember this way, the paradoxical result is that exercise looks less potent than it is, since the studies' "active" people appear to have needed plenty of exercise to gain health benefits, when the objective amount of exercise they actually completed was less, and this smaller amount produced the gains. So, for the new study, which was published last week in a special issue of the British Journal of Sports Medicine devoted to the World Health Organization's updated physical activity guidelines and related research, many of the authors of the 2016 review decided to, in effect, repeat that earlier research and analysis, but, this time, use data from people who had worn activity monitors to objectively track how much they moved and sat.

The scientists wound up gathering results from nine recent studies in which almost 50,000 men and women wore accelerometers. These studies' volunteers were middle-aged or older and lived in Europe or the United States. Combining and collating the nine studies' data, the scientists found that most of the volunteers sat a lot, averaging close to 10 hours a day, and many barely moved, exercising moderately, usually by walking, for as little as two or three minutes a day. The researchers then checked death registries for about a decade after people had joined their respective studies and started comparing

lifestyles and life spans. Dividing people into thirds, based on how much they moved and sat, the researchers found, to no one's surprise, that being extremely sedentary was hazardous, with people in the top third for sitting and bottom third for activity having about 260 per cent more likelihood of premature death than the men and women who moved the most and sat the least. (The researchers controlled for smoking, body mass and other factors that might have influenced the results.)

Other combinations of time spent sitting and moving were less alarming, though, and even heartening. People in the middle third for activity, who exercised moderately for about 11 minutes a day, were significantly less likely to have died prematurely than people who moved less, even if all of them belonged to the group that also sat the most. Crunching the numbers further, the researchers concluded that the sweet spot for physical activity and longevity seemed to arrive at about 35 minutes a day of brisk walking or other moderate activities, an amount that led to the greatest statistical improvement in life span, no matter how many hours someone sat. Of course, this study was observational and does not prove that exercise caused people to live longer, only that physical activity, sitting and mortality were linked. But the results strongly suggest that if we sit all day, as so many of us do, we should aim, too, to get up and move, says Ulf Ekelund, a professor of epidemiology and physical activity at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences in Oslo, Norway, who led the new study. "Brisk walking is excellent moderate exercise," he says, and, in half-hour stints — or even less — might help to lengthen our lives. —CNA



Gawking at two of the rarest diamonds in the world — right here in Singapore

We can all agree that 2020 has been unlike any other year. While some of us would go so far as to call it the worst year ever, there's no denying that 2020 will go down in the books as a difficult period. Amid lockdowns, travel bans and so on, it's been hard to find little bouts of joy in our everyday lives.

Which is how I find myself increasingly looking at pretty things, like jewellery, as a form of distraction and escapism.

So when Louis Vuitton extended an invitation to view two of its rarest diamonds in the world at a "secret location", suffice to say, I was intrigued.

That secret location turned out to be Capella Singapore on Sentosa, where the fashion house has taken over one of the hotel's colo-



nial manors for its high jewellery showcase. But first, a little backstory: In a bid to demonstrate the house's ambition to be a serious player in the high jewellery field, Louis Vuitton acquired the world's second biggest diamond, the 1,758-carat Sewelo, in January this year.

While the acquisition of the Sewelo was certainly surprising, Louis Vuitton shocked the jewellery world again when it announced a second diamond discovery. This time, it was a 549-carat rough diamond of superlative quality from the Karowe Mine in Botswana, named the Sethunya. To see the Sewelo up close in its natural, uncut form is



already a rare opportunity. After all, it is the second largest diamond in the world. The first, the Cullinan diamond uncovered in 1905, has already been cut up.

But to see the Sewelo together with the Sethunya, also in its uncut state, is an even rarer feat, a Louis Vuitton representative reminded us at the press presentation. Rough diamonds are very seldom presented directly to clients. Before seeing the two stars of the show, however, we were brought on a tour of Vuitton's latest high jewellery collection, Stellar Times. Designed by Francesca Amfitheatrof, artistic director of jewellery for Louis Vuitton, the collection draws inspiration from the galactic universe. Personally, I found the theme very apt for a time when we all wish we could escape Earth. The collection is divided into seven outer-space themes — Lune Bleue, Apogee, Planete Bleue, Celeste, Astre Rouge, Interstellaire and Soleils. Some of the standout pieces include the Planete Bleue necklace. The choker is set with a 4.63-carat Zambian green emerald representing Earth, along with a Monogram flower-cut diamond, before swooping over the neck and ending at the décolletage with a blue sapphire from Madagascar, reminiscent of the depths of the ocean.

Planete Bleue Necklace — 13.77 cts pear shaped sapphire and 4.63 cts emerald cut emerald Iridescent opals take centre stage for Celeste, where structural earrings and bracelets evoke the

beauty of the constellations. The Soleils jewellery pieces feature yellow sapphires, reflecting the power of the sun.

We were then ushered to a separate room to view the two diamonds specially flown in to Singapore. The Sewelo needs little introduction, having already showcased here back in August. The Sethunya, however, captivated with its translucent beauty. While the glinting black Sewelo



is still coated with a layer of carbon, the Sethunya is stunningly pure and white. As the Louis Vuitton representative very poetically described, both diamonds, sitting side by side, appeared to represent both yin and yang. After several attempts to take a good photo of the Sethunya on my own, I concluded that the beauty of the gem is best seen in real life. The Sethunya is estimated to be between one to two billion years old. Its name translates to "flower" in the Southern African Setswana language, a nod to Louis Vuitton's emblematic Monogram flower. While the estimated pricings of both dia-

monds are kept confidential, the Sethunya diamond is estimated to be of higher value than the Sewelo, although it's smaller in size. Unlike the Sethunya, the Sewelo is covered with a thin layer of black carbon, thus its true potential still remains a mystery.

For interested parties with very deep pockets, Louis Vuitton can create bespoke high jewellery pieces from the two diamonds, with the clients involved in the entire creative process.

As with the Sewelo, Louis Vuitton has joined with Lucara, a leading producer of large, exceptional quality diamonds and owner of the Karowe diamond mine where the gem was discovered; and HB Antwerp, a world-renowned diamond supply chain and manufacturing company, to design and polish the Sethunya for its clients. "Our clients are searching for uniqueness, something that they cannot find somewhere else. Globally there is an increased demand for one-of-a-kind creations," said Michael Burke, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Louis Vuitton.

The Sethunya is expected to yield exceptionally beautiful polished stones of the highest quality in clarity and colour. Cutting possibilities from the Sethunya are multiple, and could include two exquisite 100-carat proprietary LV signature-cut polished diamonds. Unique to Louis Vuitton is the ability to cut diamonds in the signet of the house's iconic Monogram — the LV Flower Cut, and the LV Star Cut, a star-shaped motif. There's also the possibility of purchasing the whole diamond, if one so wishes, to create heirloom jewellery for the entire family, cut from the same gem. Gemstones are truly one of the most beautiful, natural creations from Mother Earth. Leaving the showcase, one thought sprang into my mind. —CNA

Submarine Santa brings festive cheer to Tokyo aquarium



TOKYO: Dressed in a Santa Claus costume, a mask and flippers, a diver waved through a curtain of tropical fish in a Tokyo aquarium at socially distanced spectators watching from behind glass. Continuing a more-than-20-year-old tradition at the Sunshine Aquarium, she held a Christmas wreath aloft as banana fish and a stingray swam by unperturbed, and used a bazooka-shaped feeder to shoot out pellets for them to feast on. "To be honest, I thought how can you swim in that outfit?" 42-year-old Keichi Matsumura, visiting with his wife and four-year-old son, told Reuters after seeing the show, which will continue until Christmas Day. For Tokyo resident Ayami Kobayashi, 35, the entertainment was all the more welcome in a year overshadowed by a pandemic. "Seeing the fish made me relax. I know it's difficult to hold events like these because of the coronavirus situation, but I'm grateful they still held the event," she said. Started in 1999, the Christmas show has taken place almost every year since. This year, as daily infection rates inch higher across Japan, the aquarium has hosted the event on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only, and placed strict limits on visitor numbers. —Reuters

BTS's Jimin leaves ARMYs gushing with new blue hair unveil

Armies 'love' the impact BTS's Jimin has on social media since, merely a hair change is enough to set Twitter ablaze with blue haired shots of the resident South Korean heartthrob. For those unaware this 'trinity' unveiling came after the boys began trending for their new looks at the 2020 Melon Music Awards Red Carpet. No sooner than that did Twitter start trending with #JiminBlueHair, with over 8,811 tweets and counting! Even ARMYs cannot believe this sudden hair change. Most have started dubbing it the 'BlueMin movement'. Whereas others are flabbergasted over the power of BTS's ARMY, (even ARMYs themselves!) One user wondered, "Just the change of his hair colour is enough to make millions of people go crazy and trend it. The power he holds. IT'S INSANE. PARK JIMIN! YOU ARE INSANE FOR THIS!" —Agencies



Angelina Jolie heaps praises on Time's 'kid of the year' Gitanjali Rao



about her kids not letting her download the app: "My kids would be like, 'Don't touch my phone, I'll do it myself.'" Rao went on to explain that her kids wouldn't mind downloading the app: "The goal is not to punish. As a teenager, I know teenagers tend to lash out sometimes. Instead, it gives you the chance to rethink what you're saying so that you know what to do next time around." Heaping praises on the prodigy, Jolie said that it is "exciting to have such a forward-thinking young, and female, inventor." "My goal has really shifted not only from creating my own devices to solve the world's problems, but inspiring others to do the same as well. Because, from personal experience, it's not easy when you don't see anyone else like you," Rao said further. —The Business

Hollywood's leading lady Angelina Jolie wore her heart on her sleeve about her children and their possessiveness when it comes to their phones. The 45-year-old was interviewing Time magazine's first-ever Kid of the Year recipient Gitanjali Rao—a young scientist who invented a project that tackles cyberbullying.

Rao's app called Kindley, she explained, is a way to "detect cyberbullying at an early stage, based on artificial-intelligence technology." While lauding the young inventor, Jolie candidly joked

Esra Bilgic and Ozge Torer's dazzling photo wins hearts



Leading Turkish actresses Esra Bilgic and Ozge Torer's dazzling photo is doing rounds on the internet and has won the hearts of their fans.

Esra Bilgic essays the role of Halime Sultan in Dirilis: Ertugrul while Ozge portrays the role of Bala Hatun, the wife of Osman in Kurulus Osman.

The photo has taken the internet by storm after it appears on the Instagram.

The popularity of Esra Bilgic and Ozge skyrocketed with their stellar performance in the historical dramas. —The Business Report

