

Four-in-Ten U.S. Employees Have Gained Weight at Their Current Jobs, CareerBuilder Study Finds

-Expert Offers Tips to Help Make Healthy Choices on the Job-

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The economy may be contributing to the expanding waistlines of U.S. workers as one-in-ten report increased snacking during the day due to concerns over the current economic situation. Overall, 43 percent say they have gained weight in their current jobs, according to a new CareerBuilder survey. The survey was conducted from February 20 through March 11, 2009 among more than 4,400 workers.

A quarter of employees report they have gained more than ten pounds and 12 percent say they gained more than 20 pounds while in their present positions. Comparing genders, women are more likely (48 percent) than men (39 percent) to say they have gained weight at their current jobs.

"Weight gain in the office is common and is a result of a variety of issues including today's economic stress and poor eating habits," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources for CareerBuilder.com. "Making little adjustments to your routine, such as bringing your lunch to work, getting up from your desk during the day, and walking instead of driving or taking public transportation will help curb some of your financial worries, while making you healthier."

Eating habits can often be a culprit in workplace weight gain. Nearly two-in-five (39 percent) employees surveyed eat out for lunch twice or more per week, making it difficult to control portions and calorie intake. In addition, 12 percent buy their lunch out of a vending machine at least once a week.

Snacking can also be a slippery slope for those trying to cut back on calories, as two-thirds (67 percent) of employees surveyed snack at least once a day, including 24 percent that snack twice a day.

One of the ways employees can cut back on workplace weight gain is by heading to the gym during lunch hour, but according to the survey, only 9 percent of employees work up a sweat in the middle of the day.

More employees may be inclined to take advantage of gym facilities during lunch and outside of work, though, as 25 percent of companies now provide gym passes, workout facilities or wellness benefits.

Haefner recommends the following tips for fending off workplace weight gain:

- Allow enough time in your morning for a balanced breakfast - While 23 percent of workers say they eat breakfast at their desks each day it may make more sense to try to have breakfast before coming to the office. That way you can prepare something healthier and actually finish it before having to start answering the phone or responding to emails.
- Drink plenty of water - Often a snack craving can be mistaken for dehydration. Be sure to keep water or another healthy beverage at your desk throughout the day so that you can hydrate freely.
- Keep track of your eating - Experts say that when you see what you are actually eating, you will be more inclined to make adjustments to your eating habits and become healthier.
- Add movement to your routine - Especially in this economic environment, every little bit of activity helps, so take the stairs to your floor, walk over to co-workers instead of calling or emailing them and get off the train or bus one stop further from your home or office to get a few extra minutes of exercise.
- Control your stress - Added pressure can fuel poor eating habits, as you can tend to overeat or make inadequate food choices when you're feeling overwhelmed. Try to manage stress with regular exercise and speak with a supervisor if your workload is drowning you.

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 4,435 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government); ages 18 and over between February 20 and March 11, 2009. With a pure probability sample of 4,435 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.47 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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