

Forty-Four Percent of Workers Have Gained Weight in Their Current Job, finds CareerBuilder's Survey

-Economy Having a Negative Impact on Waist Lines- -Women Gaining More Weight Than Men- - Expert Offers Tips for Workers to Get Their Weight Under Control Before Summer-

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The combination of work stress and economic pressures appears to be playing a role in the U.S. labor force's weight gain. Overall, 44 percent of workers say they have gained weight in their current jobs, up slightly from 43 percent in 2009, according to a new CareerBuilder survey. Nearly one-third (32 percent) of workers say that stress contributed to their weight gain at work. The survey was conducted from February 10 through March 2, 2010 among more than 4,800 workers.

Other factors workers cite for contributing to weight gain in the office include:

- Sitting at a desk most of the day - 49 percent
- Eating out regularly - 25 percent
- Workplace celebrations (potlucks, birthdays, etc) - 16 percent
- Skipping meals because of time constraints - 14 percent

More than one-quarter (28 percent) 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 were more likely to put on weight than men and were more likely to gain a higher amount of pounds. Half of female workers (50 percent) say they have gained weight in their current position, compared to 39 percent of their male counterparts. Thirty percent of women gained more than 10 pounds compared to 23 percent of men.

"Especially in this economy, it is easier to pick up unhealthy eating habits in the office as workers spend more time on heavier workloads and less time on themselves," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources for CareerBuilder. "Employers know that employees who are healthier and have less stress are more productive and ultimately stay longer in their positions. Because of this, we continue to see employers taking a more proactive role in their staff's health by offering perks such as gym passes, onsite workout facilities, wellness benefits and even contests that promote healthy living."

One of the ways employees can cut back on workplace weight gain is by heading to the gym during lunch hour, but only 9 percent of employees said they work up a sweat in the middle of the day. Female workers take advantage of a lunchtime workout more than their male counterparts, at 11 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Not packing a lunch can be a major contributor to weight gain in the office. Half of workers surveyed say they eat out for lunch at least five days a week, making it difficult to control portions and calorie intake. Snacking can also be a slippery slope for those trying to cut back on calories; two-thirds (65 percent) of employees snack at least once a day, including one-quarter that snack twice a day.

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

Set an eating schedule for your workday - planning out all your meals and snacks will help control your hunger. Allow your work calendar to send you alerts when it is time for you to eat something and make sure you actually eat.

Pack a lunch and snacks - You are less likely to eat something unhealthy if you bring food from home. You can control portions, take in less calories and save money. Consider lower calorie foods such as canned soups, lean lunch meats, fat-free or reduced calorie chips, celery and carrots, grapes, low-fat yogurt, reduced calorie cookies, etc.

Find a weight loss buddy in the office - Close to one-in-ten workers say they have joined a weight loss program with co-workers. Your company is made up of various different teams that work together toward one goal - success. Apply the same principle to your weight loss by recruiting coworkers looking to shed a few pounds.

Go the extra mile - 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.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder among 4,803 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government); ages 18 and over between February 10 and March 2, 2010 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. employers, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 4,803, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.41 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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