

New CareerBuilder Survey Finds the Economy May Be Making Workers Healthier

--Workers Share Details of Their Lunch and Smoke Break Routines--

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The resounding effects of the economic downturn have some workers making healthier choices when it comes to lunch breaks and smoking habits during the work day. According to a new CareerBuilder survey, 47 percent of workers report they have been packing a lunch more often to eat healthier or help save money. When it comes to smoking habits, 44 percent of workers who smoke said they are more likely to quit smoking given today's economic conditions. In addition one-in-five said that they have decreased the number of times they smoke during the work day (21 percent) or actually quit altogether (20 percent). The CareerBuilder survey was conducted among more than 4,400 workers between May 18 and June 3, 2010.

"Economic stress over the last year has caused some workers to reflect on their habits, and many of them have turned to healthier routines," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources for CareerBuilder. "In addition to helping cut personal costs, employees who limit their smoking and lunching out habits are taking better care of their overall health. This type of 'better-for-you' behavior can be encouraged by companies who implement wellness programs, healthy living challenges or smoking cessation support."

While some workers are embracing healthier habits, heavier workloads and added stress associated with downsized operations may have other workers taking a different direction.

Lunch breaks

Taking the time to recharge during the work day can be a challenge for some workers. Nearly one-third (32 percent) report they take less than a half hour for lunch, while 5 percent take less than 15 minutes. One-in-ten never take a lunch break and 16 percent report they work right through their lunch hour. Nearly one-in-five (18 percent) typically don't leave their desks during their lunch break and eat in their workspace 5 days a week.

As some workers struggle to fit in break time during the day, others choose to multitask on their lunch hour, using their breaks for the following activities

- Hanging out with co-workers - 23 percent
- Running errands - 18 percent
- Doing work - 16 percent
- Walking - 10 percent
- Shopping - 7 percent
- Working out - 3 percent

Smoke breaks

Of workers who smoke, 78 percent of them said they take up to ten minutes for each of their smoke breaks a day. Seven-in-ten (70 percent) report they take up to 3 smoke breaks a day, while 12 percent take more than five smoke breaks in a work day.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 4,498 U.S. workers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government); ages 18 and over between May 18 and June 3, 2010 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. Employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 4,498 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.46 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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