

Forty-Five Percent of U.S. Employees Have Gained Weight at Their Current Jobs, CareerBuilder.com Study Finds

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

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Swimsuit season is right around the corner and for many people that means one thing: dieting. In an office setting, though, cutting back on calories and finding time to exercise can seem like an impassable hurdle, as a new CareerBuilder.com survey reports that 45 percent of workers have gained weight at their current jobs, similar to last year's findings. The survey was conducted from February 11 through March 13, 2008 among 7,688 workers.

Twenty-six 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 are more likely (50 percent) than men (42 percent) to say they have gained weight at their current jobs.

Comparing industries, 53 percent of financial services employees and 52 percent of government employees say they have gained weight in their current positions; the highest recorded weight gain among industries surveyed. Retail and leisure and hospitality had the lowest percentage of employees gain weight in their current roles, at 36 percent and 41 percent, respectively.

"Weight gain can be quite common in the workplace, especially when the winter months keep most of us cooped up all day and calorie-laden treats seem to wait around every corner," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources for CareerBuilder.com. "As the weather warms up and people are more likely to get in a healthy mindset, it's a great time of year to be more aware of your health, get active and be more cognizant of your food choices."

Eating habits can often be a culprit in workplace weight gain. Nearly two-in-five (38 percent) percent of employees surveyed eat out for lunch twice or more per week, making it difficult to control portions and calorie intake. An additional 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 (66 percent) of employees surveyed snack at least once a day, while nearly 25 percent snack at least 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 28 percent of companies now provide gym passes, workout facilities or wellness benefits.

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

- * Start the day off right -- Eating a high-protein and fiber-filled breakfast can provide the energy you need to get you to lunch and avoid the temptation of break room donuts, candy or other high-fat treats.
- * Stay hydrated -- Sometimes 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.
- * Write it down -- Keeping a nutrition and food journal can help you track how your snacks and meals add up during the day, allowing you to notice when you overindulge.
- * Mix up your routine -- Every little bit of activity helps, so take the stairs to your floor, walk over to co-workers instead of calling or emailing them or try parking your car farther away from the office.
- * Keep your cool -- Stress 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 you're workload is drowning you.

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 7,688 U.S. employees (employed full-time; not self-employed) ages 18 and over between February 11, and March 13, 2008, respectively. With a pure probability sample of 7,688 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.1 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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