



## How to Avoid On-the-Job Weight Gain

*Avoid Packing on Pounds Behind Your Desk*

-- By Rebecca Pratt, staff writer- Sparkpeople

Even if you love your job, it may be killing you.

It's no secret that sedentary jobs (and lifestyles) have contributed *dramatically* to the accelerating obesity rate of the past 20 years. Put emphasis on the word 'dramatically'—a study conducted by the University of Chicago in 2001 found that a worker in a sedentary career may end up with a [Body Mass Index](#) 3.3 units higher than someone in a highly active job. If you're 5'5" this can mean an increase in weight from 140 pounds to 155 pounds!

Now that you've heard the bad news, let's turn to the good news... **You CAN love your less-than-active job and be fit. Here's how:**

1. **Be sure to eat.** It's easy to slog through a day of meetings, e-mails, and phone calls to discover at 4 p.m. that you haven't eaten since breakfast. But, your body needs energy to get you through the day. Make it a priority to have a healthy *and* tasty meal—along with 1-2 healthy snacks. It is not a sin to opt for such shortcuts as microwave meals, as long as you read labels to avoid items with excess calories and sodium.
2. **Compensate, compensate.** Get physical to compensate for your sedentary workday. Join a gym, take an early morning run, or find time for fitness fun with your family. Buy one or two pieces of home exercise equipment that will allow you to exercise no matter what the weather.
3. **Rework your network.** Chances are, your friends and co-workers need help with their love handles just as much as you do. So, try some new activities that don't revolve around food. Organize a bi-weekly volleyball game, walk during lunch, or play a quick round of mini-golf after work.
4. **Bring your buddies on board.** While you're coaxing co-workers to modify those after-work habits, see if you can't involve them in a friendly get-fit challenge *during* work hours. By sharing healthy potluck lunches, exchanging recipes, and providing moral support, you'll find that getting in shape can be a team-building triumph. (You might even check with Human Resources or management to see if you can involve them in a fun or meaningful way—since healthy employees save \$\$\$.)
5. **Don't eat due to boredom.** Blacklist the office vending machine by stashing strategic healthy snacks (apples and almond butter, low-cal energy bars, nuts, or hummus and pita bread) that will give you a lift without adding to your waistline. Keep water at your desk; it'll give your hands something to do when you're stressed and will divert you from eating when you're not really hungry.
6. **Vary your routine.** We all have them—those daily social rituals, like heading upstairs to the cafeteria for a mid-morning latte and muffin. If you want to change your life in big ways, try some small changes, like substituting a yogurt and black coffee with skim milk half the time. You'll save about 470 calories (660 vs. 160)!
7. **Lose the technology.** Modern advances are great, but do you control them or do they control you? As much as possible, take advantage of opportunities throughout the day to get up and *move*! Deliver that memo in person, sit on a stability ball at your desk to improve your posture, park at the far end of the parking lot for a brisk walk to your building. You'll be surprised how quickly minor changes can improve

your energy level and help you get fit.

8. **Choose wisely.** Whether you normally go out for lunch or eat in the cafeteria, try to make your meal choices conscious ones. Learn how to eat out wisely, and remember how much better you feel come mid-afternoon when you eat healthy. If you find that your cafeteria or workplace doesn't offer healthy choices, check with the person who's in charge of food service—you may be the person who tips the balance to get better options!

One in five Americans is obese; three in five are either overweight or obese. But sitting at a desk doesn't have to mean you'll be just another statistic! Incorporating these simple strategies into your workday will bring you one step closer to being a healthier, more energetic you.

