

Avoid Packing on Pounds



Becca Pratt from SparkPeople discovered that Australian researchers found that men sitting at their desks more than six hours a day are nearly twice as likely to be overweight than those who sit for less than 45 minutes a day. While women fared slightly better—spending on average 20 more minutes on their feet at the

office than men—researchers conclude that a sedentary job is a major health concern for both genders.

And 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!

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.

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.

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 \$\$\$.)

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. If you know that occasionally you'll fall—and most of us do—pick out ahead of time the items you can live with so that your *dip* doesn't become a *dive*. 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.

Vary your routine. We all have them—those daily social rituals, like heading upstairs to the cafeteria for a mid-morning latte and muffin. You can still have those items...but make it sometimes, not *all* times. 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)! (And you're taking the stairs up to the cafeteria, right?)

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.

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.

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The Benefits of Berries

Leanne Beattie from SparkPeople found that, isn't it wonderful when something that tastes so yummy is also good for you? That's what you get when you enjoy the delicious, sweet flavor of berries. The pigments that give berries their deep red, blue, black and purple hues are powerful, disease-fighting antioxidants. It is believed that antioxidant-rich foods offer protection against conditions such as heart disease and cancer.

The scientific community measures the antioxidant levels in foods using the ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity) test. The higher the ORAC value, the more antioxidants a food provides.



Scientists have discovered that berries have some of the highest antioxidant levels of any fresh fruits. Raspberries, for example, contain an especially high level of antioxidants—three times more than kiwis and 10 times more than tomatoes.

Raspberries: Slightly tart and juicy, the raspberry is a nutritional powerhouse in a tiny package. Raspberries are rich in ellagic acid (which provides the majority of the berry's antioxidants), and anthocyanins (which give raspberries their deep, red color and exhibit antimicrobial properties). As if their high antioxidant content wasn't enough, raspberries are also great sources of the vitamins and minerals riboflavin, niacin, folate, magnesium, potassium, copper, manganese and vitamin C. *Note: Raspberries contain oxalates, a naturally-occurring substance that can build up in body fluids and crystallize, causing health problems. If you have any kidney or gallbladder problems, you may want to avoid raspberries for this reason.

Most cultivated varieties of raspberries are grown in California from June through October. Raspberries are highly perishable and should be purchased one or two days before using. Choose berries that are firm, plump and deep in color and avoid any that are mushy or moldy. Make sure that they are not packed too tightly in their container, since this may crush them. Because raspberries are so perishable, use care when storing them. Remove any spoiled or moldy berries before putting them in the refrigerator and then place the unwashed berries in their original container or spread them out on a plate lined with a paper towel. Avoid keeping raspberries out at room temperature or exposing them to sunlight for very long, they will spoil quickly in these conditions.

Raspberries can be enjoyed plain or mixed with yogurt for a healthy snack. Toss a few on top of your breakfast cereal or in your pancakes. Add them to salads for an unusual taste sensation. Top your raspberry-filled salad with balsamic vinegar to really bring out the flavor of the berries.

Blueberries: Blueberries are small and mighty, known for their anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. They also contain anthocyanin, the antioxidant that gives the berry its deep color and may also help improve learning and memory (according to studies on mice). Like most berries, blueberries are rich in disease-fighting antioxidants, as well as B vitamins, fiber and vitamins C, E and K.

North America is the world's leading blueberry producer, accounting for almost 90% of the world's production. Harvest time in North America begins mid-April in Florida, peaks in July, and runs through early October in British Columbia.

Look for fresh blueberries that are firm, dry, plump and smooth. They should be deep purple-blue or blue-black in color (reddish-colored berries aren't ripe but may be used for cooking). Stay away from containers that are stained with juice, as this may be a sign that the berries are overripe, crushed or moldy. Fresh blueberries can be covered and stored in the refrigerator for up to ten days and washed just before using.

While blueberries can be eaten raw, they are often cooked in pies, pancakes and muffins. Add a few fresh blueberries to yogurt or cereal, cook them into a sweet syrup for topping ice cream, waffles or pancakes.

Cranberries: Scientific research continues to prove the health benefits of the tart and tangy cranberry. Cranberries are sources of polyphenols, antioxidants that may benefit the cardiovascular system, immune system and act as anti-cancer agents. They also contain tannins, which have anti-clotting properties. Besides being a rich in antioxidants, cranberries also boast fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium and more.

Cranberry juices and sauces are available in the grocery store year-round, while fresh cranberries are in-season from September to December—just in time for festive holiday dishes. When purchasing them fresh, go for plump, firm (an indicator of quality) cranberries that are deep red in color. Before storing in the refrigerator, discard soft, discolored or shriveled berries. Frozen cranberries will keep for years, but used immediately once thawed.

Cranberries make a healthy addition to your diet, no matter how you enjoy them—as juice, sauce, fresh or dried. For the most nutrients and antioxidants, choose fresh or dried cranberries. Cranberry juice is very popular but look out for added sugars—buy 100% pure juice. Cranberry “drinks” or “cocktails” that contain added water, sugar and sweeteners contain the fewest antioxidants. Dried cranberries are a flavorful addition to salads and can be added to stuffing or baked into muffins. Fresh cranberries can be boiled into a tangy sauce or chutney and make a great addition to roasted pork or fowl.

ANTIOXIDANT-RICH FOODS PROTECT AGAINST HEART DISEASE AND CANCER

Blackberries: Plump, dark and juicy, blackberries are another delicious source of anthocyanin pigments and ellagic acids (both with healthy antioxidant properties), as well as vitamins C and E, fiber and the phytochemical lycopene, which protects eyesight. With anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, a dose of blackberries may help fight minor infections too.

While the season for fresh blackberries runs from May to July, frozen blackberries can be found all year round. As with other types of berries, treat blackberries with care and wash just before eating. Add blackberries to

fruit salad or bake with them as you would raspberries or other fruit. A fresh trifle of layered cake, custard and berries makes a delicious summer dessert.

Strawberries: It's easy to see why strawberries are one of the most popular berries. Fragrant, sweet and juicy, strawberries taste as good as they are for you! This rich source of vitamin C, folate, fiber and B-vitamins also packs phytonutrients and antioxidants, such as phenols, which give strawberries heart-protecting, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties.

Strawberries reach their peak between April through July when they become widely available and most delicious. They are extremely perishable, so purchase them just a few days prior to use. Look for berries that are mold-free, firm, plump, deep red in color, and shiny—with their green “caps” attached. Avoid those with green or yellow patches, which indicate sourness and poor quality. Make sure that they are not packed too tightly in their container, as this may crush them. Before refrigerating, remove all moldy or damaged strawberries. Strawberries will keep fresh in the refrigerator for one or two days.

Strawberries are often enjoyed with desserts like pies, ice cream, shortcakes, and chocolate. Try plain strawberries, or add them to your morning cereal or yogurt, as a side to your pancakes, or mixed into fruit salad or fresh green salads. Protein-rich smoothies are another great option for strawberries.

No matter how you try 'em, berries are healthy foods that do wonders for your body.

Assess your stress

How's your stress level these days? If it's higher than you'd like it to be, you can take action.

Start by examining the causes of your stress. For one week, keep a list of all the demands on your time - work, kids' activities, your commute or chores at home. Then, on a scale of 1 (not very intense) to 10 (very intense) rate the level of stress that each demand causes. Put your list together in a worksheet.

After you've completed your list ask yourself three critical questions:

- 1.) Is this a short-term issue that will soon go away? Or is it a long-term problem that I need to learn to cope with or better manage?
- 2.) Is there anything I can do to control this issue, or should I just focus on controlling my response to it?
- 3.) Can I set any limits for myself or others that may help me resolve this issue?

As you discover more about why you're stressing out, you can begin to create solutions. Choose one of your high-ranked stressors and begin to work out ways to decrease its negative effects on your life. If you need help, talk to your doctor or find a professionally led stress management program.

Source: Mayo Clinic Health Solutions February 2009

7 Tips to Help Improve Your Body Image

Are you happy with your body? Do you know someone who has a body you're envious of, but they're not happy? Are there dangers in spending too much time focusing on your body?

Recognize that bodies come in all different shapes and sizes. There is no one "right" body size. Your body is not, and should not, be exactly like anyone else's. Try to see your body as a facet to your uniqueness and individuality. Consider giving up your goal of achieving the "perfect" body and work at accepting your body.

ONE: Be aware of the negative self-talk about your body. Respond to your negative thoughts with an affirmation. For example, rather than thinking, "I look gross," substitute a positive affirmation such as "I accept myself the way I am" or "I'm a worthwhile person, fat and all."

TWO: Remember that your body size, shape or weight does not determine your identity or worth as a person. You are more than just a body. Expand the view of yourself to include qualities such as sensitive, patient, caring, artistic, etc.

THREE: Be assertive with others who comment on your body. Let people know that comments on your physical appearance are not appreciated. Confront people who tease others about their bodies.

FOUR: Focus on the ways your body enables you to participate in life. Appreciate how your body functions rather than obsessing on its appearance. For example, appreciate that your arms enable you to hold your loved ones, your legs enable you to walk, etc.

FIVE: Find friends who are not overly concerned with weight or appearance.

SIX: Aim for lifestyle mastery, rather than mastery over your body appearance. Lifestyle mastery involves developing your unique gifts and potential, expressing yourself, developing meaningful relationships, learning to problem solve, establishing goals and contributing to life. View exercise and balanced eating as aspects of lifetime self-care.

SEVEN: Focus on the qualities you like in yourself that are not related to appearance. Spend time developing these capacities rather than letting your appearance define your identity and your worth.

Source: <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

How to make work more satisfying

All jobs have Characteristics that make them more or less satisfying to perform. Research shows that set factors such as working conditions and workload, for example, are directly related to employees' job satisfaction.

There may not be much you can do to change some things about your job. But several factors related to job satisfaction from the work you do make the most of the job factors you can control. Try to:

✓ Improve your job skills by taking a class or working with a mentor. The new knowledge you gain may improve the way you work and even put you on the path toward a promotion.

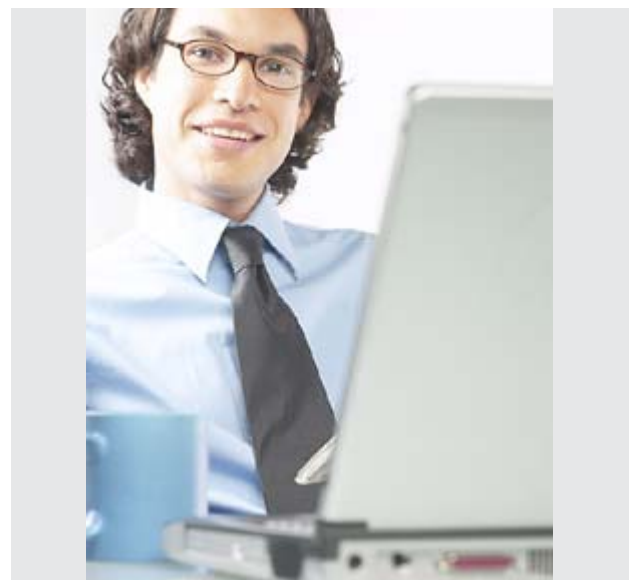
✓ Mentor a co-worker. Helping a new co-worker or intern advance in their skills can often make work more satisfying.

✓ Ask your supervisor about developing your own project, taking on a new responsibility or training in a task your organization needs. The variety can help keep work interesting.

✓ Break up difficult projects into smaller, more manageable steps.

✓ Make the most of work breaks. Take a walk, read a book or do some other activity that allows your brain to shift gears.

✓ Build relationships with your co-workers. Frequent interaction with others and colleague-to-colleague friendships have been shown to increase job satisfaction.



Source: Mayo Clinic Health Solutions, February 2009

10 Ways to Boost Your Metabolism

Boosting the metabolism is the holy grail of weight watchers everywhere, but how fast your body burns calories depends on several factors. Men tend to burn more calories than women, even while resting. And for most people, metabolism slows steadily after age 40. Although you can't control your age, gender, or genetics, there are other ways to get a boost.



Build Muscle: Our bodies constantly burn calories, even when we're doing nothing. This resting metabolic rate is much higher in people with more muscle. Every pound of muscle uses about 6 calories a day just to sustain itself, while each pound of fat burns only 2 calories daily. That small difference can add up over time. In addition, after a bout of resistance training,

muscles are activated all over your body, increasing your average daily metabolic rate.

Kick Your Workout Up a Notch: Aerobic exercise may not build big muscles, but it can rev up your metabolism in the hours after a workout. The key is to push yourself. High-intensity exercise delivers a bigger, longer increase in resting metabolic rate than low- or moderate workouts. To get the benefits, try a more intense class at the gym or include short bursts of jogging during your regular walk.

Drink More Water: The body needs water to process calories. If you are even mildly dehydrated, your metabolism may slow down. In one study, adults who drank eight or more glasses of water a day burned more calories than those who drank four. To stay hydrated, drink a glass of water or other unsweetened beverage before every meal and snack. In addition, try munching on fresh fruits and vegetables, which are full of fluid, rather than pretzels or chips.

Have Your Drinks on the Rocks: Ice-cold beverages prompt the body to burn more calories during digestion. Research suggests five or six glasses of water on the rocks can use up an extra 10 calories a day. That might not sound like much, but it adds up to a pound of weight loss per year — without dieting. You can get the same benefit by drinking iced tea or coffee, as long as you forego the cream and sugar.

Eat More Often: Eating more really can help you lose weight — eating more often, that is. When you eat large meals with many hours in between, you train your metabolism to slow down. Having a small meal or snack every 3 to 4 hours keeps your metabolism cranking, so you burn more calories over the

course of a day. Several studies have also shown that people who snack regularly eat less at meal time.

Spice Up Your Meals: Spicy foods contain chemical compounds that kick the metabolism into high gear. Eating a tablespoon of chopped red or green chili pepper can temporarily boost your metabolic rate by 23 percent. Some studies suggest the effect only lasts about half an hour, but if you eat spicy foods often, the benefits may add up. For a quick boost, spice up pasta dishes, chili, and stews with red-pepper flakes.

Eat More Protein: The body burns up to twice as many calories digesting protein as it uses for fat or carbohydrates. Although you want to eat a balanced diet, replacing carbs with lean, protein-rich foods can jump-start the metabolism at mealtime. Healthy sources of protein include lean beef and pork, fish, white meat chicken, tofu, nuts, beans, eggs, and low-fat dairy products.

Drink Black Coffee: If you're a coffee drinker, you probably enjoy the increased energy and concentration that follows your morning ritual. Well, some of these benefits are linked to a short-term increase in your metabolic rate. In one study, the caffeine in two cups of coffee prompted a 145-pound woman to burn 50 extra calories over the next four hours. Just be sure to drink it black. If you add cream, sugar, or flavored syrups, you'll take in far more calories than you burn.

Drink Green Tea: Drinking green tea or oolong tea offers the combined benefits of caffeine and catechins, substances shown to rev up the metabolism for a couple hours. Research suggests drinking two to four cups of either tea may push the body to burn an extra 50 calories each day. That adds up to 5 pounds of weight loss in a year.



Avoid Crash Diets: Crash diets — those involving eating fewer than 1,000 calories a day — are disastrous for anyone hoping to quicken their metabolism.

Although these diets may help you drop pounds (at the expense of good nutrition), a high percentage of the loss comes from muscle. The lower your muscle mass, the slower your metabolism. The final result is a body that burns far fewer calories (and gains weight faster) than the one you had before the diet.

Best Bets: The impact of different foods and drinks on the metabolism is small compared to what you need for sustained weight loss. Your best bet for creating a mean calorie-burning machine is to build muscle and stay active. The more you move during the day, the more calories you burn. And remember: working out in the morning has the benefit of revving up your metabolism for hours.

Source: WebMD

Recipe: Halibut with tomato basil salsa

Dietitian's tip: Halibut — in addition to cod, flounder and perch — is a lean fish, having less than 2.5 percent fat by weight. For a variation to this recipe, grill the halibut and spoon the tomato basil salsa over each fillet to serve.

SERVES 4

Ingredients

2 tomatoes, diced, 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped, 1 teaspoon fresh oregano, chopped, 1 tablespoon minced garlic, 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, 4 halibut fillets, each 4 ounces

Directions

• Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly coat a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with cooking spray.

- In a small bowl, combine the tomato, basil, oregano and garlic. Add the olive oil and mix well.
- Arrange the halibut fillets in the baking pan. Spoon the tomato mixture over the fish. Place in the oven and bake until the fish is opaque throughout when tested with the tip of a knife, about 10 to 15 minutes.
- Transfer to individual plates and serve immediately.

Nutritional Analysis (per serving)

Serving size: 1 fillet

Calories 160	Cholesterol 36 mg
Protein 24 g	Sodium 65 mg
Carbohydrate 3 g	Calcium 66 mg
Total fat 5 g	Potassium 672 mg
Saturated fat 1 g	Fiber 1 g
Monounsaturated fat 3 g	

By Mayo Clinic Staff

