

## AVOIDING OFFICE OBESITY: 10 TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY AT WORK



Two out of three Americans are considered overweight or obese. The country is obsessed with combatting fat. What's the cause? Is it sugary sodas? Readily available fast food? A lack of education? Poverty? For some, it's possible that work environments are contributing to waistlines.

According to Australian researchers, men who sit at a desk for more than six hours a day are about two times as likely to be overweight than their counterparts who sit for only 45 minutes a day. Here are a few tips to battle sedentary sluggishness and fight off the impending pounds.

### 1. Use the Buddy System

If you're looking to escape office weight gain, chances are that you're not alone. Poll your office and find someone else who is making healthier choices. Become a team, create a walking club, sit at a healthy lunch table, or perhaps even make workday fitness challenges designed to keep you motivated.

### 2. Drink Water

That two o'clock feeling after lunch when you struggle to keep your eyelids open and your brain focused could be because you're dehydrated. The average adult needs to drink 8-10 glasses of water every day to be adequately hydrated. A side benefit of drinking water is that it will keep you full. Try keeping a refillable water bottle at your desk and reach for it when you start to feel a midmorning pang or an urge for an afternoon salty snack.

### 3. Stop Boredom Eating

Sometimes it's easy to eat out of sheer boredom or to break up monotonous work. Can't stare at that spreadsheet for one more minute? It's time for a snack break. Alternatively, turn those trips to the kitchen into a quick walk around the office or a moment to chat with a coworker.

### 4. Pack Your Own Food

In today's world of corporate cafeterias filled with heavy comfort food, not to mention break room vending machines stocked with tasty treats, it's important to manage your food choices. An easy way to get ahead of what you eat is to pack your lunch and snacks after dinner the night before. Once you're satisfied after dinner, try packing a healthy and balanced meal along with some delicious and nutritious snacks such as raw almonds, fruit, celery, and hummus, or whole grain crackers and cheese. When you've taken the time to provide yourself with food, it's easier to make those healthy choices throughout the day.

### 5. Stand on Your Own Two Feet

Sitting at a desk can be harmful to not only your waistline but also to your muscles. Combat poor posture and bad circulation by walking around throughout the day and occasionally choosing a different working position. If your company provides standing desks, try one out. If not, find a higher surface such as a break room counter, or stack boxes on your desk to make a higher surface so that you can use your computer while standing. You'll be surprised how different you feel after only an hour.

### 6. Get Up and Get Out

Grab that fitness friend and take an afternoon walk. For those with restrictive break times, try shortening the amount of time you sit at the lunch table and taking a 15-minute stroll around the block. The little bit of exercise will not only get your blood pumping and make you feel more active, it'll also help you focus.

### 7. Try Technology

There are many different fitness technologies designed to help people become self-aware about their lifestyles and to help them make positive changes to their routines. Pick up a pedometer and set a daily step goal, or try some newer innovations such as Fitbit or Nike FuelBand to help you set realistic activity and exercise goals for your everyday life. Free mobile applications such as MyFitnessPal will track your food intake and provide helpful feedback to keep you on track by reminding you that you should stick within certain calorie counts or amounts of protein versus carbohydrates consumed. Strava can track your daily walks or runs while telling you the distance you've gone and calories burned.

### 8. Take the Stairs

Skip the elevator and climb those stairs to your desk every morning. Your heart will get pumping, and you'll be ready to conquer that inbox once you arrive at your desk.

### 9. Send Fewer Emails

Do you really need to send an email to your coworker 50 feet away, asking them if they would like a PDF or a Word document? Get up and walk over. The benefit of more face time with your coworkers will be two-fold. You will enjoy having a quick chat, and you'll also get up from your desk and move around a bit more.

### 10. Make it Fun

Try starting an office softball league or organizing a company-wide kickball game. You'll not only feel healthier, but you'll also get to know your coworkers better and help grow teamwork simultaneously.

It's no easy feat to ignore Monday morning donuts in the office break room or to stay away from the vending machine at two o'clock. However, with a bit of self-awareness and some moral support, you can combat the nine-to-five weight gain. What else do you do to stay healthy and fit at work? Comment below.

