LIVE WELL ● 🍎 🏋 ♥ WORK WELL

Fitness Trackers May Not Help You Lose Weight

Fitness trackers such as armbands and wristbands are growing in popularity. However, according to a recent study, they're not helping people lose weight.

American researchers tracked 470 people, aged 18 to 35, who were either overweight or obese, for 24 months. All of the participants were put on low-calorie diets, given exercise plans and invited to regular group sessions.

After six months, half of the group was given armband fitness trackers. The tracked activity from the armbands was then fed into a computer programme that also provided a food tracking option. The other half were simply told to monitor their exercise and diet without the aid of fitness trackers.

Participants who were given the armbands lost less weight than those who monitored their own activity. The group using the armbands lost an average of 7.7 pounds over two years, while the self-monitored group lost an average of 13 pounds.

Although the results of the study indicated increased weight loss amongst people who didn't use fitness trackers, the results of the study do not suggest that people should avoid using wearable devices to help meet their weight loss goals.

In fact, most wearables actually go far beyond data collection and do much more to aid in weight loss than the armbands used in the study did, such as offering health guidance and providing motivation from associated social networks.

5 Reasons You Need a Healthy Work-life Balance

National Work Life Week—an opportunity for both employers and employees to focus on well-being at work and work-life balance—ran from 3rd to 7th October. Although the campaign is over, it is important to strive for a healthy work-life balance all year long.

In order to value your wellness and overall health, here are five reasons you should avoid working too hard if your work-life balance involves more 'work' than 'life':

1. **Working long hours negatively impacts your health.** People who work more than 55 hours per week have a 33 per cent higher risk of stroke than those who work normal hours. Also, their sedentary lifestyles are linked to increased stress levels and unhealthy eating habits.

2. **Working long hours doesn't inflate your bank account.** In Britain, 1 in 4 employees works at least seven hours of unpaid overtime.

3. **Working long hours doesn't mean that you're getting more work done.** Studies have shown that employees who work long hours accomplish the same amount of work as those who work normal business hours.

4. **Time away from work increases creativity and open-mindedness.** Spending time away from the workplace allows people to see their challenges in a different light and find solutions more easily.

5. **There is more to life than work.** Taking time away from work allows you to grow as a person and provides an outlet for stress.

For more information regarding how you can achieve a better work-life balance, visit http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk, Britain's top organisation for helping people achieve better work-life balance.

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Easy, Healthy Workplace Lunches

These healthy lunches take little time to make and are highly satisfying:

1. **Chicken guacamole wrap.** Spread 2 Tbsps. of shop-bought guacamole down the middle of a tortilla wrap. Lay half of a shredded chicken breast and half of a sliced red pepper on top. Sprinkle it with 30 g of grated cheddar and roll it up tightly in cling film. (Serves 1)

2. **Very easy pasta salad.** Cook 85 g of pasta shapes, adding 3 Tbsp. each of frozen peas and frozen sweet corn during the final minute. Drain, then rinse in cold water. Mix 1 Tbsp. each of natural yoghurt and balsamic dressing, with 1 tsp. of mayo. Pour onto the pasta, and stir in 1 Tbsp. of chopped basil and 3 halved cherry tomatoes. (Serves 1)

3. **Mini ham rolls.** Mix 1 Tbsp. of mayo with 1 tsp. each of wholegrain mustard and honey. Split 2 small wholemeal rolls in half and spread each side with the mayo mixture. Stuff each roll with 2 or 3 slices of cucumber, 1 baby gem leaf and 1 slice of ham. (Serves 1)

4. **Sweet potato & chickpea soup** Heat 1 Tbsp. of olive oil in a pan. Add 1 finely diced onion, and cook for 3 minutes. Add 2 sliced garlic cloves and cook for 2 more minutes. Add 1 tsp. each of ground cumin and ground coriander, and cook for 1 minute. Add 1 sweet potato, cut into 1 cm cubes. Fry for 2 minutes, then add 600 ml of hot vegetable stock. Boil for 10 minutes until potato is tender. Add a 220 g can of chickpeas, drained. Heat through before blending until smooth. Stir in 1 Tbsp. of soured cream and 50 ml of milk. Pour into a thermos when hot. (Serves 2)

5 Ways to Eat Healthy at Work

Sometimes we use work as an excuse for an unhealthy diet, but with a little awareness and planning, it's simple to stay healthy at work.

1. Plan your lunches ahead of time for the week. Try to base your meals on low-fat, starchy foods like potatoes, pasta and brown rice that you can add vegetables to and reheat at work. Vegetables fill you up while adding a minimal amount of calories. Try grating courgettes and carrots into sauces like Bolognese. Sauces freeze well and only take minutes to reheat.

2. Incorporate fruit and vegetables whenever you can. If you like to snack or have a sweet tooth, keep healthier alternatives to processed food and sweets nearby. Tinned fruits in 100 per cent juice count as well.

3. Don't forget about fish. You should eat at least two portions of fish per week, which is easier to do when you have both lunch and dinner as options. Remember that one serving of fish should be oily, such as salmon, tuna, sardines, trout and mackerel. If you're concerned about the odour, combine tinned tuna or sardines with mayo and spread it on bread for an easy sandwich.

4. Don't skip breakfast. Research has shown that eating a healthy breakfast can prevent people from snacking throughout the day. Instant porridge is full of fibre and easy to heat up at work—just add hot water and stir. Add some fruit to make it even more healthy and tasty.

5. Keep water handy throughout the day and aim to drink a set amount per day, depending on how active you are, instead of sugary and/or caffeinated drinks.

WORKPLACE HEALTHY EATING TIPS

At work, avoid eating:
Sweets, chocolate and biscuits

Try:
Fruit or dairy options to satisfy your sweet tooth

At work, avoid drinking:
Too much tea and coffee

Try:
Water or herbal teas.