

Short walk cuts chocolate consumption in half

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A 15-minute walk can cut snacking on chocolate at work by half, according to research by the University of Exeter. The study showed that, even in stressful situations, workers eat only half as much chocolate as they normally would after this short burst of physical activity.

Published in the journal *Appetite*, the research suggests that employees may find that short breaks away from their desks can help keep their minds off snacking.

In the study, 78 regular chocolate-eaters were invited to enter a simulated [work environment](#), after two days [abstinence](#) from chocolate snacking. Two groups were asked to take a brisk 15-minute walk on a treadmill and were then given work to complete at a desk. One group was given an easy, low-stress task, while the other was asked to complete a more demanding job. The other two groups were asked to have a rest before completing the same tasks as the first two groups. Again, half were given an easier and the remainder a more challenging task. Chocolate was available in a bowl on the desk for all participants as they carried out their work.

Those who had exercised before working consumed on average half the amount of chocolate as the others: around 15 grammes, compared with 28 grammes. 15 grammes is equivalent to a small 'treat size' or 'fun size' [chocolate bar](#).

The difficulty of the task made no difference to the amount of chocolate

they ate, which suggests that stress did not contribute to their [cravings](#) for sweet snacks.

Lead researcher Professor Adrian Taylor of the University of Exeter said: "We know that snacking on [high calorie foods](#), like chocolate, at work can become a mindless habit and can lead to [weight gain](#) over time. We often feel that these snacks give us an energy boost, or help us deal with the stress of our jobs, including boredom. People often find it difficult to cut down on their daily treats but this study shows that by taking a short walk, they are able to regulate their intake by half."

Exercise is known to have significant benefits for mood and energy levels and has potential for managing addictions. Professor Taylor and his colleagues at the University of Exeter have previously shown that exercise can curb cravings for chocolate but this is the first study to show a reduction in consumption.

Provided by University of Exeter

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