

1 in 5 people don't have time to look after their health

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Dr Lyndall Strazdins. Credit: Stuart Hay, ANU

One in five people aged 25 to 54 years old don't have time to exercise and eat healthy food, a new study led by ANU has found.

Lead researcher Dr Lyndall Strazdins said results from the first [longitudinal study](#) of time as a determinant of health rang alarm bells for health problems including obesity, [heart disease](#) and Type 2 Diabetes.

"The overworking culture in Australia is entrenched. We need to limit working hours so people can spend more time doing things that are good for their health," said Dr Strazdins from the ANU Research School of Population Health.

"Everyone knows that it's harder for people who are poor to be healthy by buying fresh food and a gym membership, but being healthy also takes time."

Whether it was a lack time or money, five per cent of people who were otherwise healthy, moved into high-risk inactivity and eating habits within a year, Dr Strazdins said.

"One in 10 people had a combination of time and income scarcity which more than doubled their risk of inactivity."

The study followed about 5,000 [people](#) aged 25 to 54 over three years, as part of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey.

Dr Strazdins analysed the results of the study with Dr Danielle Venn, a labour-market economist from ANU.

"People with time commitments of 70 hours per week, including work, commutes and caring duties, were considered [time](#) poor," she said.

The research is published in *Social Science & Medicine*.

More information: Danielle Venn et al. Your money or your time? How both types of scarcity matter to physical activity and healthy eating, *Social Science & Medicine* (2016). [DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.10.023](#)

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