



Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



A Guide To Better Desk Dining: Reasons and Tips to Stay Away from the Desk

Introduction

Snacking while working; It's something most of us have done at one point or another. Given that many of us are currently working from home, the desire to snack while at our desks may be at an all time high. And why wouldn't it be? Whether we're in the office or working from home, snacks are just a short distance away. In this article, we'll not only dive into why snacking while working may not be the best idea, but also how to make healthier choices if we do snack at our desks.

Mindless Eating

One of the first pitfalls of snacking at the desk is that it tends to be mindless. Many of us will have a box or bag of something sweet or salty in the office. As soon as that snack is opened, we take our first handful. And another, and another. We've been working so diligently we've failed to realize we're now 8 handfuls deep into that bag of pretzels. What started as an attempt to satiate an honest hunger evolved into overindulgence. We may feel we have a good grasp on how much we should eat, but it's very easy to get carried away.

Gradual Weight Gain

Mindlessly eating at our desks throughout the day can only lead to one thing: An accumulation of excess calories. Those excess calories may not lead to immediate weight gain, but they can lead to what's known as creeping weight gain. One study looking at the effects of office snacking found that on average, office workers who snacked consumed an additional 1,300 calories per week. These calories over the course of a few weeks or a couple months can lead to legitimate weight gain.

Snacking on the Wrong Foods

Why do these desk snacks lead to excess calories? In addition to overeating, most of these snacks tend to be unhealthy "convenience" snacks. Pretzels, chips, crackers, soft drinks, candy, the list goes on. The snacks that are pre-packaged and have longer shelf lives are the ones we tend to keep at our desks. This also means that they tend to be higher in things like sodium, sugar, and fats.



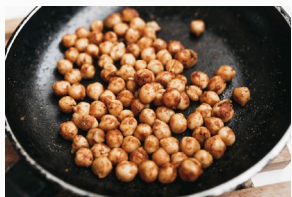
Keep Your Hunger at Bay

One of the primary tools of defense against desk snacking is making sure you keep your hunger at bay. One of the easiest ways to do this is incorporating more protein in your breakfast and lunch. Proteins are a complex structure that require additional time to digest. This extra time spend in the digestive system means we'll feel fuller for a longer period of time. So the next time you're making breakfast, don't be afraid to incorporate some healthy proteins. Nuts, eggs, and whole grains in complex cereals are great choices that will help you stave off hunger until lunch. The same goes for lunch; Pack yourself some extra nuts, lean animal protein, or vegan/vegetarian options like soy to keep yourself satisfied until the end of the workday.

Does this mean I should never snack at my desk?

Of course not, it simply means you need to be smart and plan ahead. Following these tips will help you make better choices when it comes to desk snacking.

1. **Plan your snacks ahead of time.** Deciding ahead of time what you'll bring to your desk will make it easier to snack healthfully and avoid undesirable processed snacks.



2. **Add some protein.** As mentioned previously, protein keeps us feeling full for longer periods of time. Peanut butter and assorted nuts are an easy, protein packed, snack to add to your arsenal.
3. **You can't go wrong with fruit (leave the skin on).** Snacking on fruit can be particularly advantageous when leaving the skin on. You'll obtain the precious vitamins and minerals your body needs while meeting your daily recommended fruit intake.

Need some inspiration? Check out the examples of healthy desk snacks below!

- Nuts and Dried Fruit
- Bell Peppers and Guacamole
- Roasted Chick Peas
- Apples and Peanut Butter
- Greek Yogurt
- Oatmeal Packets
- Carrots and Hummus
- Almonds and Cashews
- Hard Boiled Eggs
- Pumpkin or Sunflower Seeds

References:

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