

move it

Adventure, Wellness & Healthy Getaways | By Nicole Dorsey-Staff



Recession Stress Equals Weight Gain

There's one thing that keeps rising during the recession: America's obesity rate has increased more than 1 percent to 26.4 percent, according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index poll. The economic downturn is slimming wallets and adding mountains of stress as consumers avoid dining out and cancel expensive personal training packages. With unemployment in the double digits, tight-fisted consumers have turned to cheaper means to feed their families.

Experts agree that recession anxiety is making Americans more prone to weight-related illnesses such as diabetes. About 70 percent of respondents to a recent Washington University survey said healthier foods are becoming increasingly difficult to afford. Meanwhile, consumers are turning to inexpensive grab-and-go snacks such as chips, cookies, and candy in between meals. (Ofentimes, they *are* the meal.) But physical activity can boost your mood, so if you stopped

going to a gym because you can no longer afford membership, go for a bike ride or watch an old exercise DVD to burn calories.

"Keep a list of activities you enjoy, which might make you feel better and provide you with alternatives when you feel the urge to eat inappropriately," said Amy Dixon, Group Fitness Manager of Equinox Fitness Clubs in Santa Monica, California. "Consistent exercise is a known antidote to depression. Plus, most stress now stems from feeling like your life is out of your control." Try to find manageable steps to make you feel more in charge by scheduling workouts with friends, doing yoga in your living room to decompress—and you'll ultimately feel less overwhelmed. "And don't forget the soothing powers of yoga and other mind-body exercises such as Tai Chi and swimming," says Dixon.



Walking Poles Budge the Pudge

Power walking not only challenges your cardio workouts, it slims and tones your whole body, too. Walking has also been proven to lower the risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers. So, you'll slash calories, drop inches, pump up your energy, and get healthier with each new routine—as quickly as you can put one foot in front of the other! Spas offering guided power walks include the Spanish Mission-style Ojai Valley Inn and Spa in Ojai, California, and the Resort at Singer Island, on Florida's Gold Coast.

But—do you want to bump your walk? Then grab some poles! Nordic Walking burns 40 percent more calories than a traditional walk in the park, according to Malin Svensson, president of Nordic Walking USA (www.nordicwalkingusa.com). "If you add walking poles to any power walk you can reach the same intensity as a slow jog but without the high-impact jarring on your joints," says personal trainer Svensson. "Walking with poles strengthens your arms, chest, and back far more than traditional walking because of the upper-body force needed to propel forward," she says. Spas that offer Nordic Walking include Riva Bella Thalasso & Spa in Corsica, France, and the Saybrook Point Inn and Spa in northern Connecticut. Instead, buy these inexpensive poles at any sporting goods store, and use them on your own neighborhood jaunts!