

Fat boys slim: 68% of Brits admit they are overweight - but we do more exercise than other Europeans

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London 10th July 2008: More than two-thirds of Britons say they are overweight but we do more exercise than other Europeans, according to the results of a survey just released by Lightspeed Research, a global online market research company. The survey of 1000 panellists in each of five European countries explored people's feelings about their weight, exercise, health and dieting.

16% of Britons admit to being "very" overweight, with 52% being "a bit" overweight. Only 28% of respondents think they do enough exercise. Yet despite this, the results showed that more Brits take exercise every week than people in the other countries surveyed (chart 1). 58% said they do up to four hours of exercise weekly, with walking (60%), exercising the dog (21%) and going to the gym (15%) as the most popular forms of regular exercise. Walking was the most popular form of exercise in every country surveyed apart from Germany where cycling is the favourite.

Half of the British respondents have dieted to lose weight. Women are the most likely to diet with 11% saying they are "always" on a diet. The good news for dieters is that the research suggests diets work. In the UK, two thirds (66%) of respondents had successfully kept weight off after dieting and 29% maintained that weight loss for over a year.

A surprisingly high number of people admitted to skipping meals to control weight. It was most common in Germany, where half of respondents admitted to missing meals and the least popular in France. 8% of British respondents said they deliberately skip meals two to three times a week and 6% more than four times a week to manage their weight.

David Day, Lightspeed Research CEO Europe said "It may surprise some to learn that more Brits exercise per week than the French, Germans, Spanish and Italians. Clearly the message about the link between good health, a sensible diet and taking exercise is getting through" but there is still a way to go to get the 19% who do no exercise at all to give up their remote control and get off their sofas.