Tipping The Scales, Or Not?

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Do you judge your size by how snug or loose your clothes are, or do you get down to the nitty-gritty of pounds and kilos?

Across all markets surveyed, only 5% of respondents said they weigh themselves daily (5% male, 6% female), and 15% do this once a week.
Thirty-six percent said they weigh themselves whenever they remember (Turkey 48%, Indonesia 45%, Argentina and China 43%) and, perhaps surprisingly in today's more health conscious societies, 22% claim not to weigh themselves at all, which makes one wonder whether people are really as conscious of their weight as we may think!

Leading the pack was India, with 40% of respondents claiming not to weigh themselves at all, closely followed by Chile (39%), and Indonesia and Romania (both 38%).

Explained Paru Minocha, Executive Director for Synovate India: "Indians' consciousness of fitness has not truly come into being.

Indians are more or less complacent about health and fitness; only when there is an advent of illness or a medical emergency do Indians start taking their health and fitness seriously.

It also has to do with the traditional clothing. Mass clothing is tailored and so a slight increase in size does not get noticed and, even among urban Indians, major changes in body weight usually take place after child birth or a certain age."

Continues Minocha:
"Indians would weigh themselves regularly only if there was a prescription from the doctor to lose weight to help avoid or get rid of certain illnesses due to weight gain. Otherwise, Indians are usually complacent and happy with their bodies."

The more weight conscious scale hoppers, weighing themselves once a week, are respondents from Korea (28%), Argentina (26%) and Brazil (25%).

"Koreans, female and male alike, are very conscious about their appearance. Checking their weight and a following healthy diet is just one part of the story," says Frank Jellinek, Business Development Manager for Synovate Korea.

"There is enormous social pressure to look good, and being beautiful is equal to being successful - this is stimulated by the looks of Korean celebrities. Fitness centres are growing like mushrooms, especially in the Seoul area. The other side of the story is, if you can't run off your weight on a treadmill in one of the country's sprawling gyms, you may opt for a short cut and join the 50% of Korean females in their 20's who have had some form of plastic surgery," Jellinek said.

Added Jill Telford, CEO of Synovate UK, who lived in Asia for 17 years: "This doesn't surprise me - Korea is a looks and body conscious country, famous for cosmetic surgery at an early age to improve looks. Being svelte is part of this culture."

The USA has the highest percentage of respondents weighing themselves daily (12% compared to the overall average of 5%).

Commented Greg Chu, Senior Vice President and Head of Synovate's Custom Healthcare group in the US: "What's interesting is that some health studies suggest that weighing yourself frequently can help you lose weight or better keep your weight under control. If so, Americans may be at the forefront of taking advantage of this insight."

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2 August 2010