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1 High habitual physical activity improves acute energy compensation in nonobese adults

2

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20 **ABSTRACT**

21 **Purpose:** Evidence suggests that homeostatic satiety signalling is enhanced with higher levels of  
22 physical activity (PA), with active individuals demonstrating an improved ability to compensate  
23 for previous energy intake (EI). However, prior studies lacked objective assessment of both PA  
24 level and EI. This study examined the effect of objectively-measured PA level on homeostatic  
25 (energy compensation) and hedonic (liking and wanting) responses to high-energy (HEP), low-  
26 energy (LEP) and control preloads.

27  
28 **Methods:** Thirty-four nonobese individuals were grouped by tertiles of accelerometry-measured  
29 habitual moderate-to-vigorous PA (low: LoMVPA; moderate: ModMVPA; high: HiMVPA),  
30 similar in age, sex and BMI. Following a preliminary assessment, EI (fixed-energy breakfast and  
31 ad libitum lunch, dinner and evening snack box meals) was determined during three probe meal  
32 days in which preloads varying in energy content (HEP: 699 kcal, LEP: 258 kcal, control: 0 kcal)  
33 were consumed prior to the lunch meal. Liking and wanting were assessed pre- and post-preload  
34 consumption (Leeds Food Preference Questionnaire) and appetite ratings were taken throughout  
35 the day.

36  
37 **Results:** Relative to control, EI at lunch was reduced to a greater extent after consumption of  
38 HEP compared to LEP in ModMVPA ( $p < .01$ ) and HiMVPA ( $p = .01$ ), but not LoMVPA ( $p = .59$ ),  
39 reflecting more accurate energy compensation in HiMVPA and ModMVPA. There were no  
40 effects on cumulative EI post-preload (lunch, dinner and snack box combined). HEP led to a  
41 greater suppression of hunger, liking and wanting compared to LEP in all MVPA tertiles.

42

43 **Conclusion:** Nonobese individuals with lower levels of measured PA were insensitive to the  
44 nutritional manipulation of the preloads, suggesting a weaker satiety response to food. This study  
45 provides objective evidence that higher habitual PA improves acute homeostatic appetite  
46 control.

47

48 **Keywords:** appetite control; satiety; preloads; energy intake; food hedonics

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64 **BACKGROUND**

65           The role of physical activity (PA) in homeostatic appetite control and body weight  
66 regulation is gaining more attention within the scientific community. Earlier reports have  
67 proposed an enhancement in the sensitivity of appetite control with increasing levels of PA (6,  
68 26), and the J-shape relationship between PA level and energy intake initially observed by Mayer  
69 et al. (30) has been recently confirmed by Shook et al. (36) and a systematic review (4). To better  
70 understand the effect of PA on food intake, it is important that distinct appetite processes such as  
71 satiation and satiety are examined. Satiation leads to meal termination, whereas satiety is the  
72 post-meal suppression of hunger and inhibition of further eating (9).

73           Recent evidence shows that satiation, measured with a passive overconsumption  
74 paradigm comparing energy intake at high-fat and high-carbohydrate meals, is not influenced by  
75 PA level in nonobese individuals matched for body mass index (BMI) (5). Satiety, however, has  
76 been shown to be improved in physically active individuals. Using a preload-test meal paradigm,  
77 studies have found that physically active individuals show better energy compensation than  
78 inactive individuals such that they reduce energy intake to offset the difference in energy  
79 consumed in the preload (23, 25, 28, 39). Moreover, measuring the satiety quotient (SQ; change  
80 in appetite scores relative to the energy content of a meal) in the hours following a fixed meal,  
81 studies have showed that satiety increases after 12 weeks of exercise training in previously  
82 inactive overweight and obese individuals (10, 22). These improvements in satiety signalling  
83 may relate to exercise-induced changes in postprandial satiety hormones such as leptin (19, 25),  
84 insulin (19, 24), and GLP-1 (24).

85           However, the beneficial effects of PA on satiety were based mainly on food diaries and  
86 all on self-reported habitual PA (23, 39). Test meals for the assessment of energy intake under

87 controlled laboratory conditions are preferred over food diaries as self-report measures are  
88 subject to bias and misreporting, and cannot be relied upon to provide a veridical account of food  
89 actually consumed (13). Additionally, with wearable technologies being more available,  
90 objective assessment of habitual PA via accelerometry can now readily be used, reducing bias  
91 from participants overestimating their PA (13, 34). Furthermore, the preloads used in previous  
92 studies were liquid-based and not matched for macronutrient composition, which may affect  
93 individuals' compensatory response (2, 29).

94 In addition to an action on homeostatic mechanisms (satiation and satiety), other  
95 mechanisms in which habitual PA may affect appetite control is the rewarding value of foods  
96 (liking and wanting) and hedonic preference for high-fat foods (21). These can override  
97 physiological satiety signals and lead to overconsumption (14). Therefore, the objective of this  
98 study was to investigate the homeostatic (energy compensation) and hedonic (liking and wanting  
99 for high-fat foods) responses to high-energy (HEP), low-energy (LEP) and control preloads in  
100 nonobese individuals differing in objectively-measured PA using an experimental system  
101 assessing several dimensions of appetite control (11). We hypothesised that more active  
102 individuals would have a greater reduction of energy after the HEP relative to LEP compared to  
103 their less active counterparts.

104

## 105 **METHODS**

106 **Participants.** Thirty-four participants aged 18-55 years were included based on the following  
107 criteria: BMI between 20.0-29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, non-smoker, weight stable ( $\pm 2$  kg for previous 3  
108 months), no change in PA over the previous 6 months, not currently dieting, no history of eating  
109 disorders, not taking any medication known to affect metabolism or appetite, and acceptance of

110 the study foods. In order to recruit three groups of participants that differed in PA level (i.e. low:  
111  $\leq 1$  day/week, moderate: 2-3 days/week or high:  $\geq 4$  days/week), the short-form of the validated  
112 International Physical Activity Questionnaire (12) was used as part of the screening process to  
113 estimate habitual moderate-to-vigorous PA (MVPA). Age, sex and BMI were also monitored  
114 throughout screening to ensure the groups were similar in these characteristics. Following initial  
115 screening, habitual MVPA was then measured and confirmed using a multi-sensor device  
116 (SenseWear Armband (SWA); BodyMedia, Inc; Pittsburgh, USA) and used to group participants  
117 into a posteriori sex-specific tertiles of daily MVPA (low: LoMVPA, moderate: ModMVPA, or  
118 high: HiMVPA). Approximately half of the participants remained in their original self-report PA  
119 group estimated by the IPAQ (45%, 45% and 58%, in the LoMVPA, ModMVPA and HiMVPA  
120 tertiles, respectively). For males, LoMVPA corresponded to  $< 112$  min MVPA/day and HiMVPA  
121 to  $> 148$  min MVPA/day, while for females, LoMVPA corresponded to  $< 90$  min MVPA/day and  
122 HiMVPA to  $> 143$  min MVPA/day. This study was approved by the School of Psychology  
123 Ethical Committee at the University of Leeds, and participants provided written informed  
124 consent prior to taking part and were remunerated upon completing the study.

125 **Study protocol.** Following preliminary assessments, LoMVPA ( $82.7 \pm 16.2$  min  
126 MVPA/day), ModMVPA ( $120.7 \pm 14.8$  min MVPA/day) and HiMVPA ( $174.0 \pm 38.6$  min  
127 MVPA/day) underwent 3 laboratory probe days, in a Latin square crossover design, that included  
128 a fixed breakfast followed by a HEP, LEP or control, and ad libitum lunch, dinner and snack box  
129 meals to examine the 24-h energy intake response to preloads varying in energy content relative  
130 to no-energy control (Figure 1).

131 For the 24 h prior to the testing sessions, the participants refrained from exercise, and did  
132 not consume caffeine or alcohol. On each test day, the participants arrived at the research unit

133 between 07:00-09:00 following a 10-h fast (no food or drink except water). Prior to the first meal  
134 day, the participants consumed their habitual diet but were required to record their food intake  
135 for 24 h in a diary that was provided to them during the preliminary assessment, and replicated  
136 their food intake prior to the subsequent meal days. Compliance with these guidelines was  
137 verified upon arrival at the laboratory for each testing session.

138         During the meal days, participants restricted their PA (i.e. were not allowed to exercise)  
139 and at each meal day, upon arrival at the laboratory, participants were fitted with the SWA and  
140 wore the monitor until the following morning (~24 h) to assess energy expenditure. Subjective  
141 appetite ratings were measured using visual analogue scales (VAS) before and after each meal  
142 and at hourly intervals throughout the day, and the hedonic preference for high-fat foods was  
143 measured with the Leeds Food Preference Questionnaire (LFPQ; (16)) before and after  
144 consumption of the preload. Energy intake at individual meals was measured (described below),  
145 and subsequently used to calculate 24-h energy intake. After a fixed energy breakfast,  
146 participants returned 3 h later for the consumption of the preloads, 1 h after which they  
147 consumed an ad libitum lunch. Dinner was consumed 4 h after lunch and participants were given  
148 an ad libitum snack box for the remainder of the evening. Each meal day was separated by at  
149 least seven days.

150         **Preliminary assessment and habitual physical activity.** At least 8 days before the meal  
151 days, resting metabolic rate (RMR; indirect calorimetry), body composition (fat mass, fat-free  
152 mass; BodPod), maximal aerobic capacity ( $VO_{2max}$ ; modified Balke protocol), and eating  
153 behaviour traits (restraint, disinhibition, binge eating, craving control) were assessed as  
154 previously described (5). Upon completion, participants were fitted with a SWA and were  
155 instructed to wear the armband on their non-dominant arm over 7 days for at least 23 h/day



156 (awake and asleep, except for the time around showering, bathing or swimming). Compliance  
157 was defined as 5 days of wear (including one weekend day) with at least 22 h/day. Proprietary  
158 algorithms available in the accompanying software (version 8.0 professional) were used to  
159 calculate total daily energy expenditure (TDEE), PA level (PAL; TDEE/basal metabolic rate),  
160 and minutes spent sleeping, sedentary (<1.5 METs) or in light intensity (1.5-2.9 METs) or  
161 moderate and higher intensity ( $\geq 3.0$  METs) PA (1).

162 **Fixed energy and ad libitum meals.** Participants consumed a fixed-energy breakfast that  
163 provided 25% of individual RMR. Upon consumption, participants were free to leave the  
164 research unit but were instructed not to eat or drink any food (except water). Three hours after  
165 breakfast, participants returned to the laboratory and consumed either a porridge HEP (699 kcal)  
166 or LEP (258 kcal) with 150g of water or 495.5g of water (control). HEP and LEP were of similar  
167 macronutrient composition (39% energy from carbohydrates, 46% energy from fat and 15%  
168 energy from protein; see Table 1 in Supplemental Digital Content 1 for ingredients of the  
169 preloads), weight, volume and palatability. Pilot testing (n=9) showed no difference in  
170 sweetness, liking, pleasantness, and desire to eat between preloads ( $p \geq .41$ ). Participants had 15  
171 minutes to consume the fixed-energy meals, and food items were weighed before and after  
172 consumption to ensure compliance.

173 One hour after the start of the preload, an ad libitum lunch consisting of risotto (1.99  
174 kcal/g, 53.3% carbohydrate, 39.9% fat, 6.8% protein) with a side of cucumber and tomatoes was  
175 provided, and four hours after lunch, an ad libitum dinner was provided, consisting of vegetarian  
176 chilli (1.30 kcal/g, 49.8% carbohydrate, 37.4% fat, 12.8% protein) with a side of pineapple. For  
177 these meals, food was provided in excess of expected consumption, and the participants were  
178 instructed to eat as much or as little as they liked until comfortably full. Following dinner,

179 participants were given a snack box containing a selection of foods (strawberry yoghurt, apples,  
180 tangerines, cheese crackers, almonds, popcorn, and granola bars) and were instructed to eat only  
181 from this snack box until they went to bed that evening. Food items were weighed before and  
182 after consumption and energy intake was calculated using energy equivalents for protein, fat and  
183 carbohydrate of 4, 9 and 3.75 kcal/g, respectively, from the manufacturers' food labels.  
184 Cumulative energy intake was calculated as energy intake at lunch, dinner and evening snack  
185 box.

186 **Appetite ratings.** Appetite ratings were assessed before and after each meal, and at  
187 hourly intervals throughout the meal day via VAS for hunger, fullness, desire to eat and  
188 prospective food consumption (PFC) using an electronic system (17). To specifically examine  
189 the effect of the preloads on satiety, area under the curve (AUC) was calculated using the  
190 trapezoid rule for the 1-h period following preload consumption (post-preload, VAS 5-7 in  
191 Figure 1) and the 2-h period following lunch consumption (post-preload and lunch, VAS 7-10 in  
192 Figure 1).

193 **Hedonic preference for high-fat foods.** The LFPQ (16) was administered pre- and post-  
194 preload consumption to determine scores of implicit wanting and explicit liking for high-fat  
195 (>50% energy) and low-fat (<20% energy) foods matched for familiarity, sweetness, protein, and  
196 acceptability, and has been validated in a wide range of research (15, 18, 40). Implicit wanting  
197 was assessed by asking the participants to select as fast as possible which food from specific  
198 categories "they most want to eat". Scores for implicit wanting were computed from mean  
199 response times adjusted for frequency. To measure explicit liking, the participant rated the  
200 extent to which they liked each food ("How pleasant would it be to taste this food now?") using a  
201 100-mm VAS. Low-fat scores were subtracted from high-fat scores to obtain the fat appeal bias

202 score; a positive score indicates greater liking or wanting towards high-fat compared to low-fat  
203 foods.

204 **Statistical analysis.** The sample size was based after the study by Long et al. (23) who  
205 demonstrated that nonobese high active individuals consumed less after a HEP relative to a LEP  
206 ( $d=0.88$ ). A similar effect size in the present study was estimated and it was calculated that  $n=10$   
207 per group would be sufficient to detect a difference in intake between HEP and LEP within  
208 groups with  $1-\beta=0.8$  and  $\alpha=0.05$ , one-tailed.

209 Differences in characteristics of the MVPA tertiles were determined via one-way  
210 ANOVAs. Pearson's correlations were conducted to examine associations between fat-free mass,  
211 RMR and daily energy intake. To examine the effect of the preloads, energy intake, appetite  
212 sensations and food hedonics (liking and wanting) in HEP and LEP relative to control were  
213 computed. Differences in relative energy intake and appetite AUC were determined via two-way  
214 mixed model ANOVA with condition (HEP, LEP) as the within-subject factor and MVPA tertile  
215 as the between-subject factor. Changes in relative liking and wanting were assessed with three-  
216 way mixed-model ANOVAs with condition and time (pre- and post-preload consumption) as the  
217 within-subject factors and MVPA tertile as the between-subject factor. Bonferroni post hoc  
218 analyses adjusted for multiple comparisons were used when significance was achieved.  
219 Significance was established at  $p<.05$ .

220

## 221 **RESULTS**

222 **Participant characteristics and habitual PA.** The characteristics of the 3 MVPA tertiles  
223 are presented in Table 1. The tertiles did not significantly differ in age, BMI, body composition,  
224 resting metabolic rate or eating behaviour traits, but by design, differed in terms of  $VO_{2max}$ ,

225 habitual PA and sedentary behaviour. Because SWA wear time differed significantly between  
226 tertiles (LoMVPA:  $1415.8 \pm 13.5$  min/day, ModMVPA:  $1420.6 \pm 8.4$  min/day, HiMVPA:  $1406.7$   
227  $\pm 13.8$  min/day;  $p=.03$ ), one-way ANCOVAs controlling for SWA wear time were conducted on  
228 habitual free-living total daily energy expenditure, light PA, MVPA, sedentary time and physical  
229 activity level (PAL).

230 **Ad libitum energy intake.** In the control condition, there were no significant differences  
231 between tertiles in energy intake at lunch, dinner, evening snack box, or daily 24-h energy intake  
232 (all  $p \geq .16$ ; see Table in Supplemental Digital Content 2 for values). Daily energy intake was  
233 associated with fat-free mass ( $r(32)= .51$ ,  $p=.002$ ) and RMR ( $r(32)= .53$ ,  $p=.001$ ).

234 For energy intake at lunch following HEP and LEP relative to control, there was a  
235 significant effect of condition, as expected, with HEP suppressing subsequent energy intake to a  
236 greater degree than LEP overall ( $p=.01$ ). Furthermore, there was a significant condition and  
237 MVPA tertile interaction ( $p=.03$ ), revealing that ModMVPA ( $p<.01$ ) and HiMVPA ( $p=.01$ ) had a  
238 greater reduction in intake after HEP compared to LEP, but no differences existed for LoMVPA  
239 ( $p=.59$ ; Figure 2 and Figure in Supplemental Digital Content 3 for individual response). There  
240 were no main effects or interaction for cumulative energy intake relative to control (lunch, dinner  
241 and evening snack box combined; all  $p>.10$ ; Table 2 and Figure in Supplemental Digital Content  
242 3 for individual response). Daily energy intake (including breakfast and preload) was greater in  
243 HEP compared to LEP in all tertiles ( $p<.001$ ; Table 2).

244 **Appetite ratings.** Following preload consumption, hunger AUC relative to control was  
245 more suppressed in HEP compared to LEP, with no differences between tertiles ( $p=.03$ ; Figure  
246 3a). There were no condition effects for fullness, desire to eat and PFC (Figure 3c-d). Following  
247 both preload and lunch consumption, AUC for hunger, desire to eat and PFC relative to control

248 were all more suppressed and fullness was greater in HEP compared to LEP, again with no  
249 differences between tertiles (all  $p \leq .03$ ; Figure 3).

250 **Food hedonics.** Two participants in HiMVPA did not have complete LFPQ data. In the  
251 control condition, there were no differences in liking and wanting fat appeal bias from pre- to  
252 post-water consumption or between tertiles (all  $p \geq .26$ ; see Table Supplemental Digital Content 4  
253 for values). For both liking and wanting pre- to post-preload relative to control, a 3-way  
254 ANOVA revealed a main effect of preload consumption ( $p \leq .01$ ) and condition and preload  
255 consumption interaction ( $p \leq .05$ ), revealing a greater reduction in liking and wanting for high-fat  
256 foods after HEP compared to LEP, but no differences relating to MVPA tertile (Figure 4).

257 **Meal day energy expenditure.** Four participants (2 ModMVPA and 2 HiMVPA) did not  
258 have valid SWA meal day data as they removed the sensor before going to bed. In the control  
259 condition, there were no significant differences between tertiles in meal day energy expenditure  
260 (LoMVPA:  $1964.6 \pm 341.4$  kcal; ModMVPA:  $2077.0 \pm 309.4$  kcal; HiMVPA:  $2270.4 \pm 394.3$   
261 kcal;  $p = .15$ ). In response to the HEP and LEP, there was no main effect of condition ( $p = .76$ ),  
262 MVPA tertile ( $p = .21$ ) or interaction between condition and MVPA tertile ( $p = .38$ ) on meal day  
263 energy expenditure (Table 2). However, overall, meal day energy expenditure was lower than  
264 habitual TDEE as measured by the SWA over 7 days by  $238 \pm 232$  kcal ( $p < .001$ ).

265

## 266 **DISCUSSION**

267 This study examined the strength of satiety, energy compensation and 24-h energy intake  
268 in individuals varying in PA levels using objective assessment of energy intake and habitual PA.  
269 Including the measurement of other biopsychological determinants of appetite control such as  
270 food hedonics allowed inferences about their impact on PA level and satiety to be drawn. In the

271 entire sample, as expected, 24-h energy intake was positively associated with fat-free mass and  
272 RMR, and HEP gave rise to greater suppression of subsequent food intake than LEP, confirming  
273 functional appetite control (7, 8). Additionally, the HEP also led to a greater suppression of  
274 hunger and reduction in food hedonics (liking and wanting for high-fat foods) compared to the  
275 LEP across all MVPA tertiles. However, an examination of the different PA levels showed that  
276 ModMVPA and HiMVPA had a greater reduction of ad libitum energy intake at lunch following  
277 consumption of the HEP compared to the LEP, whereas LoMVPA did not, supporting a role for  
278 habitual PA in the sensitivity of appetite control.

279

### 280 **Habitual physical activity and energy compensation**

281 Unlike previous studies examining the impact of PA level on energy compensation, this  
282 study classified groups on objective and quantified habitual MVPA. Furthermore, to reduce the  
283 likelihood of confounding effects on the compensatory response, the preloads were matched for  
284 macronutrient composition and consisted of a semi-solid food (rather than a liquid), and the  
285 MVPA tertiles were similar in terms of participant age, sex and BMI. The results show that the  
286 LoMVPA tertile were less sensitive to the nutritional manipulation of the preload, compared to  
287 the ModMVPA and HiMVPA groups who showed a greater reduction in subsequent intake in  
288 response to HEP. This is consistent with previous studies in which low levels of PA were found  
289 to be detrimental to homeostatic appetite control (23, 25, 28, 39). In contrast, previous studies  
290 have reported that the physiological processes that signal satiety appear to be enhanced with  
291 habitual PA or exercise-training, with changes seen in postprandial appetite-related peptides  
292 favouring satiety (19, 24, 25). Interestingly, Sim et al. (37) observed a tendency towards a  
293 reduction in energy intake following intake of a HEP with a concomitant improvement in insulin

294 sensitivity after 12 weeks of high-intensity intermittent exercise training but not moderate-  
295 intensity continuous exercise training. This supports the thought that insulin sensitivity mediates  
296 the strength of satiety peptides such as GLP-1 and CCK (31, 35). Another process that could  
297 mediate the release of appetite-related peptides to signal satiety is gastric emptying, which was  
298 found to be faster in active compared to inactive males (20).

299         The inter-relationships that exist between PA, sedentary behaviour, body composition,  
300 and TDEE make it difficult to isolate which specific component associated with PA is  
301 contributing to the sensitivity of appetite control. Nonetheless, long-term habitual PA may lead  
302 to chronic physiological adaptations involved in satiety signalling, including reduced fat mass  
303 and enhanced insulin sensitivity, fine-tuning the appetite control system in its ability to detect  
304 adjustments in energy intake (over- or under-consumption) and to compensate appropriately at a  
305 subsequent meal. In line with these findings, the present study found intake to be reduced in the  
306 ModMVPA and HiMVPA groups in response to HEP. While improved post-meal satiety has  
307 been noted in physically active individuals, studies have reported that satiation does not differ  
308 between active and inactive individuals, as these distinct appetite processes may have differing  
309 underlying mechanisms (5).

310         The acute preload response at the ad libitum lunch meal in ModMVPA and HiMVPA  
311 was similar to that previously observed; however, previous evidence on daily (cumulative)  
312 energy compensation is conflicting. Some studies have demonstrated improvements in daily  
313 energy compensation with greater PA (25, 28), whereas another study, in line with the current  
314 results, suggests no improvements (37). Of note, assessment of daily energy intake in the  
315 aforementioned studies was done via food diaries which are prone to bias and misreporting, but  
316 in the current study, energy intake was objectively-assessed over 24 h. Furthermore, there was a

317 large variability in the individual response in terms of cumulative EI, which may have  
318 contributed to the non-significant results. Other methodological factors may also explain these  
319 inconsistent findings, such as the different designs (exercise-training vs. cross-sectional), or  
320 physical characteristics (liquid vs. semi-solid) and macronutrient composition (matched vs.  
321 unmatched) of the preloads used between studies (3). Nevertheless, total daily energy intake was  
322 greater following HEP compared to LEP in all MVPA tertiles. This highlights the importance of  
323 promoting the consumption of foods lower in energy density to avoid a passive overconsumption  
324 of energy (33), irrespective of PA level (5).

325

### 326 **Impact of HEP and LEP on appetite sensations and food hedonics**

327 In all MVPA tertiles, compared to LEP, HEP led to a greater suppression of hunger, and  
328 after lunch, greater fullness and suppression of hunger, desire to eat and prospective food  
329 consumption. Changes in appetite sensations following consumption of liquid preloads varying  
330 in energy content in inactive and active individuals have been inconsistent across studies, with  
331 one showing greater fullness after HEP compared to LEP (27), while others showing no  
332 differences in appetite sensations (23, 25). In the current study, a semi-solid preload was  
333 preferred over a liquid preload to elicit a strong impact on appetite and in the following  
334 compensatory response in energy intake within the time frame allocated between preload  
335 consumption and ad libitum meal (2). Interestingly, all tertiles showed a greater suppression of  
336 hunger following HEP but only the more active tertiles reduced energy intake at lunch after its  
337 consumption. The effects observed on appetite sensations are difficult to translate into clinical  
338 significance and may depend on PA level.



339           The consumption of the HEP was reflected by a greater reduction in both liking and  
340 wanting fat appeal bias relative to LEP, without any differences between tertiles. This reduction  
341 in the hedonic preference for high-fat foods was likely mediated by the greater energy content of  
342 the HEP (~400 kcal) and subsequent greater suppression of hunger following its consumption. In  
343 contrast, we have recently observed no differences in liking and wanting fat appeal bias  
344 following ad libitum consumption of a high-fat/high-energy-dense meal compared to a low-  
345 fat/low-energy-dense meal (to a similar level of fullness) despite a greater energy intake of just  
346 below 400 kcal at the high-fat meal (5). Thus, it appears that an individual's hunger/satiety state  
347 may mediate the hedonic response to meals to a greater extent than energy intake or  
348 macronutrient composition, with greater suppression of hunger and/or perceived fullness leading  
349 to a greater reduction in liking and wanting for high-fat relative to low-fat foods. Alternatively,  
350 consumption of fixed (i.e. preload) and ad libitum meals may produce distinct hedonic responses.  
351 As with the appetite sensations, considering all tertiles responded similarly in their liking and  
352 wanting response, but differently in terms of energy intake, the effects observed on food  
353 hedonics were likely small. The mechanisms responsible for the blunted compensatory response  
354 in energy intake in LoMVPA remain to be fully elucidated, and in the current study, seem not to  
355 be related to the subjective appetite or hedonic response to the preloads.

356           In terms of the influence of PA level on the hedonic preference for high-fat foods, in the  
357 current nonobese sample, no differences in liking and wanting among MVPA tertiles were  
358 observed. These findings corroborate our previous findings where similarities in food hedonics  
359 in nonobese individuals differing in PA levels were also found (5). Heightened rewarding value  
360 of foods may be dependent upon a greater accumulation of body fat, as greater liking and  
361 wanting for high-fat foods have been observed in overweight inactive males compared to their

362 leaner active counterparts (21) and also in overweight/obese females compared to healthy-weight  
363 females (32).

364

### 365 **Limitations**

366           Strengths of this study include robust measurements of objective PA to classify groups  
367 according to MVPA tertiles and probe meal days to quantify 24-h energy intake within a multi-  
368 level experimental platform to assess various components of appetite control and eating  
369 behaviour. However, this enhanced control did not allow for a very large sample size and may  
370 not have reflected real-world or long-term effects. Furthermore, a standardised diet on the days  
371 prior to the meal days was not provided, which may have strengthened the results. Assessment of  
372 postprandial appetite-related peptides following the preloads could also have provided a better  
373 depiction of satiety signalling differences between the MVPA tertiles, and should be addressed in  
374 future studies. It should also be acknowledged that the study only included nonobese individuals  
375 and this did not allow for the inclusion of very inactive and sedentary individuals; therefore, the  
376 individuals in the LoMVPA tertile were relatively active (~80 min/day of total MVPA).  
377 Although, according to a recent analysis comparing data obtained from PA sensors (as in the  
378 present study) with current PA guidelines, the amount of total daily MVPA (through structured  
379 PA and non-structured daily activities) to achieve PA guidelines (PAL of 1.75) is approximately  
380 140 min/day of total MVPA (38). Nevertheless, this study was conducted in lean individuals and  
381 the findings may not be applicable to individuals who are obese and/or very inactive. Indeed it is  
382 now our view that PA will exert differing effects on appetite control according to the amount of  
383 fat mass and the proportion of truly sedentary behaviour. There is not one general rule that  
384 covers the relationship of PA and appetite control across the entire population.

385

386 **Conclusions**

387           Consumption of a HEP reduced energy intake at the following meal in nonobese  
388 individuals with moderate to high levels of MVPA compared to a LEP; however, this effect was  
389 absent in individuals with lower levels of MVPA. This suggests individuals with low levels of  
390 PA have a weaker satiety response to food. On the other hand, individuals who are more  
391 physically active are sensitive to the energy content of foods and have better ability to adjust  
392 intake at a subsequent meal. The mechanisms underlying this process remains to be fully  
393 elucidated, but could be linked to physiological satiety signalling rather than hedonic factors.  
394 Using objective measures of PA and energy intake, these data support previous evidence that  
395 lower levels of PA in nonobese individuals are detrimental to acute homeostatic appetite control.

396

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399

400 **Conflicts of Interest**

401           The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. The results of the present study do  
402 not constitute endorsement by ACSM and are presented clearly, honestly, and without  
403 fabrication, falsification, or inappropriate data manipulation.

404

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519 **List of Supplemental Digital Content**

520 **Supplemental Digital Content 1 (docx): Table 1** Ingredients and macronutrient composition of  
521 the high-energy preload (HEP) and low-energy preload (LEP)

522

523 **Supplemental Digital Content 2 (docx): Table 1** Absolute energy intake in the control, low-  
524 energy preload (LEP) and high-energy preload (HEP) conditions across tertiles of MVPA

525

526 **Supplemental Digital Content 3 (tiff): Figure 1** Individual response in lunch and cumulative  
527 EI relative to control in the low-energy preload (LEP) and high-energy preload (HEP) conditions  
528 across tertiles of MVPA

529

530 **Supplemental Digital Content 4 (docx): Table 1** Absolute liking and wanting fat appeal bias  
531 scores pre- and post-preload consumption in the control, low-energy preload (LEP) and high-  
532 energy preload (HEP) conditions across tertiles of MVPA

533

534 **Figure captions**

535 **Figure 1** Experimental protocol. RMR resting metabolic rate;  $VO_{2max}$  maximal aerobic capacity;  
536 VAS appetite visual analogue scales; LFPQ Leeds Food Preference Questionnaire; HEP high-  
537 energy preload; LEP low-energy preload; CON no-energy control.

538

539 **Figure 2** Energy intake at lunch after the high-energy (HEP) and low-energy (LEP) preloads  
540 relative to control. Significant condition and MVPA tertile interaction, with post hoc analyses  
541 revealing that ModMVPA and HiMVPA had a greater reduction in intake after HEP compared to  
542 LEP \* $p \leq .01$ . LoMVPA, low moderate-to-vigorous physical activity tertile; ModMVPA,

543 moderate moderate-to-vigorous physical activity tertile; HiMVPA, high moderate-to-vigorous  
544 physical activity tertile. Error bars indicate standard error of the mean.

545

546 **Figure 3** Area under the curve (AUC) for ratings hunger (A), fullness (B), desire to eat (C) and  
547 prospective food consumption (PFC; D) following consumption of the high-energy (HEP) and  
548 low-energy (LEP) preloads relative to control (post-preload, VAS 5-7 over 1h; post-preload &  
549 lunch, VAS 7-10 over 2h). For clarity, group means are shown, demonstrating a main effect of  
550 condition \* $p < .05$ . Positive values indicate greater appetite scores relative to control and negative  
551 values indicate lower appetite scores relative to control. Error bars indicate standard error of the  
552 mean.

553

554 **Figure 4** Liking (A) and wanting (B) pre- and post-consumption of the low-energy (LEP) and  
555 high-energy (HEP) preloads relative to control. For clarity, group means are shown,  
556 demonstrating a significant interactions between condition and preload consumption, with post  
557 hoc analyses showing a greater reduction in liking and wanting for high-fat foods pre- to post-  
558 preload in HEP compared to LEP † $p < .01$  \* $p = .001$  \*\* $p < .001$ . Positive scores indicate greater  
559 liking or wanting towards high-fat compared to low-fat foods, whereas negative scores indicate  
560 greater liking or wanting towards low-fat compared to high-fat foods. Error bars indicate  
561 standard error of the mean.