

Women are piling on the pounds because they have cut down on housework, study shows

- **Women now burn up to 360 calories less a day than their parents**
- **Housewives in 1965 spent 27 hours a week cooking, cleaning and washing**
- **Women now spend only 13.3 hours a week on housework, research shows**

By Daily Mail Reporter

We have long been told that our unhealthy diet is why we are all too fat.

But now, when it comes to women at least, researchers have a rather more controversial explanation for rising obesity - they are not doing enough housework.

Women are piling on the pounds because they have cut down on the amount they are cooking and cleaning, a study has shown.

They are burning up to 360 calories less a day than their parents did because they are so sedentary around the house.

Sedentary: Women burn up to 360 calories less a day than their parents because they do less housework

Women have also used the hours gained from time saving technology like washing machines to spend twice as much of their lives sitting watching TV than they did in the 1960s.

The findings are likely to outrage working mothers for whom there is still a gender imbalance when it comes to housework.

Despite advances in women's rights in terms of pay and conditions, in many cases they are still doing the bulk of the cooking and cleaning.

The study was carried out in the US by Edward Archer, a research fellow with the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina. Similar studies have also shown the same result.

He studied thousands of 'time-use diaries' provided by American women every year beginning in 1965. He found that back then women spent an average of 25.7 hours a week doing the laundry, cooking and cleaning. In 2010 things had changed and women were spending an average of 13.3 hours per week on housework. A recent survey by npower in the UK found a similar trend.

On average women now spend 18.2 hours a week on housework, including cleaning, vacuuming, food shopping and cooking.

This compares to 44 hours a week on average in 1965, according to official figures from the Department for Education.



Traditional housewife: 50 years ago women spent an average of 25.7 hours a week cooking and cleaning

Dr Archer found that as a result of the change, housewives were burning around 360 calories every day - more than the typical chocolate bar - less than they did in the 1960s.

Working women burn about 132 fewer calories.

In a depressing twist, with all that extra time in their lives women have apparently used it to sit down and watch TV. Dr Archer found that in 1965 women typically spent eight hours a week catching up on their favourite programmes. By 2010 that had more than doubled to 16.5 hours a week.

Dr Archer said that the overall trend was to 'large reductions in energy expenditure'. He concluded that women needed to 'start finding ways to incorporate movement' into their daily routine such as walking to the post box, chopping vegetables or playing with the dog. In Britain research shows that women are still doing more around the house than most men. According to one study from Oxford University, if current trends continue women will have to wait until 2050 before men are doing an equal share of the chores.

Feminist and relationships expert Jean Hannah Edelstein said it was a 'preposterous, sexist assumption' to suggest that women should do more cleaning to slim down.

She said: 'It's not like men are getting any thinner either - perhaps they should get off their behinds and do some more housework!'