



Ricardo Riskalla is one of Australia's leading Fitness and Health experts. Contacting Ricardo is the first step to living a healthy lifestyle.

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Five everyday things you could be addicted to

 coach.nine.com.au/lifecoach/hidden-addictions/d188fc3f-c32f-4b7f-a193-3368bcfb7ce3

Living a clean life? It doesn't mean you're not dependant on a few surprising things.

Cheese, glorious cheese

If the thought of going without cheese makes you feel sick to your stomach, you're in some solid company. Researchers at the University of Michigan have proven that cheese contains similarly addictive chemicals found in opiates which leave you wanting more (and more).

Yep, whether it's cheese-heavy pizza, a cheesy bake, or just a simple cheeseboard, it appears that the high levels of casein (a protein found in milk) triggers the brain's opioid receptors to offer a reaction similar to that of drug addiction. It's a possible reason by those whose who give up meat struggle with extending themselves to saying sayonara to dairy products.

Exercise

Although nowhere near as exciting as a wheel of Saint Agur, addition to exercise is on the increase in both men and women, says personal trainer, author and nutrition expert Ricardo Riskalla, of [Ricardo Riskalla Training](#).

"More than ever, I'm noticing people are trying to go above and beyond my recommendations for them, thinking that they can get the 'celebrity look' by exercising for hours on end but this is just not the case," he says.

"I see firsthand how sacrificing family time, work hours and a social life to over-exercise can destroy a person's life, but it's difficult to get a handle on because exercise itself has such a positive public image."

One study by Stanford University found that while mortality rates were lower for men who exercised regularly, rates began to ruse for those who over-exercised, burning more than 3,500 calories per week.

Certain songs

Got a passion for listening to the same songs over and over again? It might drive loved ones (and potentially, neighbours) crazy, but you have a credible excuse: you are addicted to this piece of music much like the person currently breaking into your car to steal coins for crack.

The 18 most addictive foods, from least to most

Do you have a food addiction? What to do when you can't stop eating



No, you're probably not 'addicted' to your smartphone – but you might use it too much



Addicted to caffeine? Here's the good news about coffee

Researchers at McGill University have found that when we listen to music we like, we experience a natural high which then releases the neurotransmitter dopamine which is often associated with rewards such as food, drugs and sex. It's the dopamine hit that makes us reach for the repeat button time and again.



Your job

Finding it difficult to step away from your job – even though other areas of your life are cracking under the strain of your dedication? You could be addicted to work, much like up to 8.3 percent of Norwegians and 8.2 percent of Hungarians, according to studies conducted using the Bergen Work Addiction Scale.

Dying at your desk aside, the effects work addiction can have on your health are numerous and devastating. One global study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* found workaholics are between 40 to 80 per cent more likely to suffer heart disease, while researchers in New Zealand found that those who work a minimum of 50 hours a week are up to three times more likely to have a drinking problem.

Sugar

Convinced you can make-do without that 3pm chocolate biscuit or that passionfruit meringue you insist on grabbing on the way home from work once (okay, two or three times) a week? Don't be so sure, say researchers at Queensland University of Technology who compared the effects of sugar on the body compared with that of cocaine and found those who suddenly stop eating sugar similar to someone who has been forced to go cold turkey off the drugs.

QUT School of Clinical Sciences lead researcher Masroor Shariff, who co-authored the study says, "Essentially, sugar affects the reward pathway in the brain, as do all other drugs of abuse."

Their suggestion? Sugar addiction should be treated like any other addiction with a slow tapering off and plenty of support.

READ NEXT: Is sugar really more addictive than heroin or cocaine?