

High energy gives humans bigger brains, more fat than other primates

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We may not be raring to go on a Monday morning, but humans are the Energizer Bunnies of the primate world. That's the conclusion of a new study that, for the first time, measures precisely how many calories humans and apes burn each day. Compared with chimpanzees and other apes, our revved-up internal engines burn calories 27% faster, according to a paper in *Nature* this week. This higher metabolic rate equips us to quickly fuel energy-hungry brain cells, sustaining our bigger brains. And lest we run out of gas when food is short, the study also found that humans are fatter than other primates, giving us energy stores to draw on in lean times.

For decades, researchers assumed that “there weren’t any differences in the rate at which different species burned calories,” says biological anthropologist Herman Pontzer of Hunter College in New York City, lead author of the new study. Comparing humans and other primates, they saw little difference in basal metabolic rate, which reflects the total calories used by our organs while we are at rest.

But in many ways, we’re not like other apes: Our brains are at least three times larger, and we produce more babies in shorter intervals—both of which consume more energy. “It has been an open question—how do we do all these expensive things?” Pontzer says.

Read full, original post: [Humans are the highest energy apes, making us smarter — but also fatter](#)