

1 **The effect of ambient temperature during acute aerobic exercise on short term appetite,**  
2 **energy intake and plasma acylated ghrelin in recreationally active males**

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48 **Abstract**

49 Ambient temperature during exercise may affect energy intake regulation. Compared with a  
50 temperate (20°C) environment, 1 h of running followed by 6 h of rest tended to decrease energy  
51 intake from two *ad libitum* meals in a hot (30°C) environment but increase it in a cool (10°C)  
52 environment ( $P=0.08$ ). Core temperature changes did not appear to mediate this trend; whether  
53 acylated ghrelin is involved is unclear. Further research is warranted to clarify these findings.

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66 **Key words** ambient temperature, exercise, appetite, energy intake, acylated ghrelin, core  
67 temperature

68 **Introduction**

69 The effects of exercise on appetite and energy intake are well documented from laboratory  
70 studies (King et al. 2010, King et al. 2011, Martins et al. 2007, Ueda et al. 2009, Wasse et al.  
71 2012). Most observe a transient suppression of appetite during exercise with no effect on  
72 subsequent energy intake. However, these observations are not unanimous because a handful  
73 of studies describe no effect of exercise on appetite (Ueda et al. 2009, Wasse et al. 2013) and  
74 some authors report increases (Martins et al. 2007) or decreases (Ueda et al. 2009) in post-  
75 exercise energy intake. Recent attention has focussed on how exercise affects concentrations  
76 of circulating appetite-regulatory gut hormones. Exercising in more extreme environmental  
77 conditions (altitude, temperature) may perturb the normal physiological responses to exercise  
78 and could subsequently affect the acute regulation of appetite. It is already known that altitude  
79 suppresses appetite (Tschöp et al. 1998), an effect that might be related to alterations in  
80 concentrations of appetite-regulatory peptides (Tschöp et al. 1998, Wasse et al. 2012).  
81 Although one laboratory study shows exercising in the heat may reduce relative energy intake  
82 (Shorten et al. 2009) most reports suggesting appetite is suppressed in the heat are anecdotal  
83 (Burke, 2001). Cold temperatures may exert the opposite effect with an increase in energy  
84 intake reported after exercise in cold water (White et al. 2005). However, whether this is  
85 directly related to the cold temperature *per se* is questionable because water immersion itself  
86 increases energy intake (Halse et al. 2011). Physiological differences, such as in substrate  
87 utilisation, are evident when individuals are exposed to cold air or cold water (Haman et al.  
88 2006). Furthermore, Wiesner and colleagues (2010) report hormonal and metabolic responses  
89 specific to exercise in water that do not occur with land-based exercise. For these reasons we  
90 surmise that the appetite response to cold air could differ to that observed in cold water,  
91 however because there is no evidence to substantiate this, research examining this notion is  
92 warranted.

93 Core temperature changes have been postulated as a mechanism responsible for alterations in  
94 energy intake in different environmental temperatures, however, this is not conclusive.  
95 Changes in gut hormone responses may also be responsible for differences in energy intake  
96 during exercise in the heat/cold. There are numerous hormones secreted from the  
97 gastrointestinal tract that are involved in the control of energy homeostasis, particularly the  
98 short-term regulation of energy intake. The majority of these hormones, which include  
99 cholecystikinin, peptide YY (PYY) and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) are secreted in the  
100 post-prandial period and contribute to meal termination and satiety (Yu and Kim, 2012).  
101 However, notable among the appetite-regulatory gut hormones is acylated ghrelin, unique in  
102 being the only known gut hormone that stimulates appetite (Wren et al. 2001), and purported  
103 to be a meal initiation factor (Cummings et al. 2001). Testament to the widespread distribution  
104 of its receptor in both central and peripheral regions, ghrelin has numerous other biological  
105 effects including being a potent stimulator of growth hormone secretion (Kojima et al. 1999)  
106 as well as having important roles in immune function (Dixit and Taub, 2005) and glucose  
107 metabolism (Verhulst and Depoortere, 2012). However, with a unique role as the only known  
108 circulating appetite-stimulating gut hormone, it is unsurprising that examining the role of  
109 ghrelin in energy homeostasis has become such a prolific area of research. Total ghrelin (des-  
110 acyl and acyl ghrelin) is up-regulated after short term cold exposure and down-regulated after  
111 short term heat exposure (Tomasik et al. 2005). How long these perturbations persist is  
112 unknown due to the short duration of exposure in that study (30 minutes); whether these  
113 alterations affect subsequent appetite and energy intake remains to be investigated. Inferences  
114 from a study investigating total ghrelin may be limited because it is generally believed it is the  
115 acylated fraction of ghrelin that is necessary for its appetite stimulatory effects (Broglia et al.  
116 2004).

117 Given the importance for athletes to maintain appropriate energy balance during episodes of  
118 training and competition which are frequently undertaken in a variety of environments,  
119 clarification is required to establish whether land-based exercise in hot or cool environments  
120 differentially affects appetite and energy intake and whether changes are related to alterations  
121 in plasma acylated ghrelin concentrations or core temperature.

122

### 123 **Materials and Methods**

124 Two separate pilot studies were approved by both the Loughborough University and  
125 Nottingham Trent University Ethics Committees. Eleven healthy, habitually active males  
126 (mean  $\pm$  SD; age  $21.1 \pm 1.2$  y, BMI  $23.6 \pm 2.2$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>, VO<sub>2peak</sub>  $56.7 \pm 5.0$  mL/kg/min) completed  
127 a ‘heat study’ and ten healthy, habitually active males (mean  $\pm$  SEM; age  $22.9 \pm 2.5$  y, BMI  
128  $23.1 \pm 1.6$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>, VO<sub>2peak</sub>  $57.9 \pm 7.3$  mL/kg/min) completed a ‘cool study’. Participants were  
129 free from metabolic and gastrointestinal abnormalities. Participants gave their written informed  
130 consent to participate, completed a submaximal and maximal oxygen uptake test on a treadmill  
131 (Woodway ELG 55; Weil am Rhein, Germany) and then completed two, 7 h trials in a  
132 randomised order in an environmental chamber (Design Environmental, Gwent, UK). Trials  
133 were separated by at least seven days. In the heat study one trial was completed in a temperate  
134 environment (20°C; control) and the other in a hot environment (30°C; experimental), in the  
135 cool study one trial was completed in a temperate environment (20°C; control) and the other in  
136 a cool environment (10°C; experimental). Relative humidity was kept constant at 50%.  
137 Participants fasted overnight prior to trials which commenced at ~9am. During the 24 h prior  
138 to the first trial, participants weighed and recorded their food intake and then replicated this  
139 before the second trial. Upon arrival, a cannula was inserted into an antecubital vein to enable  
140 frequent sampling of venous blood and a rectal thermometer (Grant Instruments, UK) was self-

141 inserted ~10 cm past the anal sphincter for monitoring core body temperature. Clothing was  
142 not standardised and participants were asked to wear clothing appropriate for the environmental  
143 temperature throughout each visit. At the start of each trial, participants completed a 60 minute  
144 treadmill run at a speed that elicited 65% of maximal oxygen uptake, followed by 6 h rest.  
145 Blood samples for acylated ghrelin were collected at baseline (0), 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.5, 6.5 and 7  
146 h into pre-cooled 5 mL EDTA tubes that were pre-treated with 50 $\mu$ L of a solution containing  
147 p-hydroxymercuribenzoic acid, phosphate buffered saline, and sodium hydroxide. After 10 min  
148 centrifugation at 3500 rpm, 2 mL of plasma were dispensed into a plain tube and 200  $\mu$ L of 1  
149 M hydrochloric acid was added before being centrifuged for 5 min at 3500 rpm. Appetite  
150 sensations were measured every 30 minutes from baseline using validated 100 mm visual  
151 analogue scales (Flint et al. 2000). Cold buffet-style meals were provided at 2 and 5.5 h to  
152 assess *ad libitum* energy intake. Foods were presented in excess of expected consumption and  
153 identical items were available to participants at both meals. These items were three varieties of  
154 breakfast cereal, semi-skimmed milk, brown and white bread, cheese, ham, tuna, butter,  
155 margarine, mayonnaise, chocolate chip cookies, salted crisps, muffins, Nutri-grain bars,  
156 chocolate rolls, mini Mars bars, apples, bananas, oranges, fruit yoghurt, chocolate Nesquik and  
157 orange juice. Acylated ghrelin concentrations were determined from plasma using a  
158 commercially available ELISA (SPI BIO, Montigny le Bretonneux, France). All statistical  
159 analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software,  
160 version 17.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, U.S.A.). Differences in fasting and AUC  
161 values for appetite perceptions, acylated ghrelin, core temperature and thermal sensations were  
162 determined using Student's t-tests. Two-factor repeated measures ANOVA was used to  
163 examine differences between trials for appetite perceptions, energy and macronutrient intake,  
164 acylated ghrelin, core temperature and thermal sensations. Statistical significance was  
165 accepted at the 5% level. Results are presented as mean  $\pm$  SD. Due to problems collecting

166 blood from one participant in the heat study, acylated ghrelin concentrations reported are for  $n$   
167 = 10. Changes in energy intake between control and experimental trials in each study were  
168 calculated and these differences compared using an independent samples T-test. Effect sizes  
169 were reported to facilitate comparison of the magnitude of the effect of hot and cool  
170 temperatures on energy intake. Effect sizes were calculated in accordance with Cohen's  
171 classification where 0.2, 0.5 and 0.8 are considered small, moderate and large effects,  
172 respectively.

173

## 174 **Results**

### 175 *Appetite*

176 Compared with the temperate environment, the hot and cool temperatures modulated the  
177 appetite response to exercise with AUC values for hunger and prospective food consumption  
178 being lower by 15% and 12% respectively prior to the first meal (0 – 2 h) in the heat trial  
179 compared with the temperate trial ( $P < 0.05$ ). Over the same time period, AUC values for  
180 satisfaction and fullness were 27% lower ( $P < 0.05$ ) and 23% lower ( $P = 0.07$ ) in the cool trial  
181 compared with the temperate trial. There were no other significant differences apparent over  
182 this time period, or across the entire 7 h trial (Table 1).

### 183 *Energy intake*

184 The total energy intake and the change in energy intake in response to different ambient  
185 temperatures varied widely between individuals (Figure 1). In the heat study, there was a trend  
186 for a reduction in cumulative energy intake in the hot trial compared with the temperate trial  
187 by  $1400 \pm 2401$  kJ ( $P = 0.08$ ; Figure 1). The opposite trend was apparent in the cool study  
188 where participants increased their energy intake by  $1450 \pm 2345$  kJ ( $P = 0.08$ ; Figure 1) in the

189 cool trial compared with the temperate trial. The effect sizes for the difference in energy intake  
190 between the temperate and their respective hot and cool trials were moderate ( $d = -0.5$  for the  
191 heat trial and  $0.5$  for the cool trial). There was a main effect of time in the heat study ( $P < 0.05$ )  
192 with participants consuming more at the morning meals than the afternoon meals, however  
193 energy intake was reduced by a similar extent ( $\sim 12\%$ ) at both the morning and afternoon meals  
194 in the hot compared with the temperate trial. There was no difference in energy intake  
195 consumed at the morning and afternoon meals in the cool study, and energy intake tended to  
196 be increased by a similar extent at each meal in the cool trial. When the delta values in energy  
197 intake between the temperate and experimental trial in each study were compared (using an  
198 independent samples T test), a significant difference was evident ( $P = 0.013$ ).

#### 199 *Acylated ghrelin*

200 No main effects of temperature on acylated ghrelin concentrations were observed in either  
201 study although a trial x time interaction was evident in both ( $P < 0.05$ ). However, post hoc  
202 analysis did not reveal differences between trials at any time points. A main effect of time  
203 showed that acylated ghrelin concentrations were suppressed at the end of exercise from  
204 baseline values (Figures 2a and 2b). Delta values in acylated ghrelin concentrations from  
205 baseline until the end of the exercise bout between the temperate and experimental trial in each  
206 study were compared (using an independent samples T test) and a significant difference was  
207 evident ( $P < 0.05$ ). Despite differences upon cessation of exercise, acylated ghrelin values were  
208 similar between trials within each study immediately prior to consumption of the first *ad*  
209 *libitum* meal at 2 h.

210

#### 211 *Core temperature*

212 Core temperature was significantly elevated on completion of exercise in the hot compared  
213 with the temperate trial ( $38.9 \pm 0.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  vs.  $38.5 \pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  respectively;  $P < 0.001$ ) but was similar  
214 thereafter. Core temperature was similar at all times between the temperate and cool trials.

215

## 216 **Discussion**

217 Results from these pilot studies indicate that the environmental temperature during and after  
218 acute exercise may transiently modulate appetite and short term energy intake but it is unlikely  
219 that changes in core temperature mediated these changes and it is uncertain whether changes  
220 in acylated ghrelin concentrations are involved. Total energy intake from two *ad libitum* meals  
221 during a 7 h trial tended to be decreased in  $30^{\circ}\text{C}$  and increased in  $10^{\circ}\text{C}$  compared with a neutral  
222  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$  environment. No individual meal was responsible for this trend, with the change in energy  
223 intake being consistent across both *ad libitum* meals indicating a persistence of effect of  
224 ambient temperature on energy intake. Although most individuals within each study respond  
225 similarly (ie: increased energy intake in the cool, decreased energy intake in the heat) there is  
226 a wide variation in individual responses (Figure 1). However, these findings give some support  
227 to the anecdotal and limited empirical evidence that ambient temperature may modulate  
228 appetite and energy intake. Furthermore, this research indicates that the effect persists when  
229 acute exercise is undertaken, and expands upon current literature by extending beyond the  
230 immediate post-exercise meal.

231 These findings are important for recreational and competitive athletes. Exercise, in the absence  
232 of compensatory increases in food intake, can produce a short term negative energy balance  
233 which may be efficacious for weight loss. The present findings provide some support for the  
234 suggestion previously proposed by Shorten et al (2009) that exercising outdoors in the heat  
235 may be preferable to exercising in an air conditioned gym if a more negative energy balance is

236 desired. From an athlete's perspective where optimal nutritional strategies can aid performance,  
237 exercising in the heat could be detrimental if an athlete voluntarily consumes less food at a  
238 subsequent meal which could lead to inadequate refuelling before ensuing events and could  
239 impair performance or recovery. Conversely, high energy intakes, particularly if above energy  
240 requirements could be detrimental to an athlete's post-exercise nutritional strategy. Given that  
241 ambient temperatures of approximately 11°C, (similar to that used within the cool study), can  
242 be advantageous to performance during prolonged moderate intensity exercise (Nimmo 2004)  
243 the findings from the present study that exercise and rest in cool temperatures of 10°C tend to  
244 increase post-exercise energy intake should be considered.

245 Previously, changes in core temperature or gut hormone concentrations (namely PYY) have  
246 been suggested to mediate the change in energy intake after exercise in different environmental  
247 temperatures (Shorten et al. 2009, White et al. 2005). In the study by White and colleagues,  
248 despite inverse relationships between core temperature and energy intake being described,  
249 actual changes in core temperature were small (0.3°C) which may be insufficient to affect  
250 appetite. Furthermore the studies by White et al (2005) and Shorten et al (2009) used tympanic  
251 temperature to assess core temperature. That method of core temperature measurement is  
252 reportedly not valid when exercising in the heat in a laboratory (Ganio et al. 2009). In our  
253 studies, we used rectal temperature (a valid and reliable method of measuring core temperature  
254 during rest and exercise) to regularly monitor core temperature. We observed similar core  
255 temperatures across trials within each study and core temperature differed only at the end of  
256 the exercise bout in the hot trial compared with the temperate trial. Thus, our findings would  
257 suggest that core temperature does not drive the changes in energy intake after acute exercise  
258 followed by rest in different environmental temperatures.

259 Tomasik and colleagues (2005) examined the effect of ambient temperature on total ghrelin  
260 concentrations and found concentrations were increased after 30 mins at 2°C and decreased

261 after 30 mins at 30°C. However, neither appetite nor energy intake were assessed so it is  
262 unknown whether changes in total ghrelin affected subsequent appetite and energy intake. In  
263 the present studies, there was not a consistent effect of ambient temperature on acylated ghrelin  
264 concentrations. Given the complex mechanisms by which appetite and food intake are  
265 regulated, it is likely that a combination of factors coordinate the food intake responses to  
266 exercise and rest in different ambient temperatures that we observed here. It has been shown  
267 that thermal perceptions are important inputs in the self-selection of exercise intensity, and  
268 thermal sensation and thermal discomfort can control thermoregulatory behaviour (Schlader et  
269 al. 2011). Participants felt “comfortable” in both temperate trials, and despite being able to  
270 wear whatever clothing they wished, reported feeling “cool” in the trial at 10°C and “hot” in  
271 the trial at 30°C. Hence thermal status may also be involved in feeding responses although this  
272 is speculative.

273

274 The gastrointestinal system does not simply exist as a reservoir for food and drink but plays a  
275 key role in the regulation of appetite and maintenance of energy balance. As well as directly  
276 influencing appetite, hormones including ghrelin and PYY that are secreted from within the  
277 gastrointestinal tract also affect gastric motility, gastric emptying and gastrointestinal blood  
278 flow. Relationships between these gastric parameters and appetite perceptions such as hunger  
279 and fullness have been observed and reviewed (Delzenne et al. 2010). The presence of an  
280 intragastric balloon can decrease hunger and increase fullness, without decreasing subsequent  
281 energy intake or affecting concentrations of appetite-regulatory peptides (Oesch et al. 2006,  
282 Rigaud et al. 1995). In the present studies participants were free to consume water *ad libitum*  
283 during trials, thus differences in hunger in the first 2 hours of the hot trial could just be a  
284 consequence of stomach distension after water ingestion which was greater than in the  
285 temperate trial (data not shown). However, it is unlikely that the trend for a reduction in energy

286 intake observed in the heat study was due to differences in stomach distension as this alone is  
287 reportedly not sufficient to affect gut hormone concentrations or energy intake. Furthermore  
288 the decrement in energy intake persisted at the afternoon meal when appetite ratings were  
289 similar between trials.

290

291 Gastric emptying may influence ingestive behaviour and although the volume of a meal  
292 influences gastric emptying, nutrients within that meal may play a greater role in affecting  
293 gastric emptying due to feedback from the intestine in response to nutrients in the gut lumen  
294 which affect secretion of peptides including CCK and PYY. Exercise in the heat does not  
295 generally affect gastric emptying rate when participants are hydrated, however emptying rates  
296 may vary dependent on the hydration status of participants. Rehrer and colleagues (1990)  
297 observed that dehydration delays gastric emptying of carbohydrate beverages. We did not  
298 quantify gastric emptying rates in these studies, so it is not possible to associate any changes  
299 in gastric emptying with alterations in energy intake. There is limited literature regarding the  
300 effect of cold ambient temperatures on gastric emptying, but unlike in the heat, dehydration  
301 will less likely be a factor impacting upon gastric emptying rate. In rats, cold ambient  
302 temperature normalises a delayed gastric emptying response induced by abdominal surgery  
303 (Stengel et al. 2010). However, it is unclear what effect the cool temperature in the present  
304 study would have on normal gastric emptying responses to food and fluid ingestion. Since  
305 ghrelin stimulates gastric motility and accelerates gastric emptying, Stengel and colleagues  
306 (2010) proposed that the normalised gastric emptying response was due to increased acylated  
307 ghrelin concentrations after cold exposure. Given the relationship between gut hormones,  
308 appetite and gastrointestinal function, perturbations in concentrations of gut hormones may act  
309 in concert to affect gastric function and appetite as well as directly influencing appetite  
310 regulatory areas within the brain.

311

312 Although our study benefits from the longer period of follow-up than in other research, there  
313 are some limitations which should be addressed in future. Due to the wide variability in energy  
314 intake responses between individuals further research is necessary to confirm these findings  
315 with greater participant numbers. This research focussed on concentrations of the appetite-  
316 stimulatory gut hormone, acylated ghrelin. However, satiety hormones secreted from the gut  
317 and adipose tissue which include, but are not limited to, PYY, GLP-1 and leptin also play  
318 integral roles in the regulation of appetite and energy intake. In future, it would be prudent to  
319 quantify concentrations of these and other hormones involved in appetite regulation in  
320 conjunction with acylated ghrelin to improve understanding of how these hormones may be  
321 perturbed in response to exercising in different ambient temperatures. This is particularly  
322 important because of the discordance between our findings and those of Shorten et al (2009)  
323 who did not observe any alterations in acylated ghrelin after exercise in the heat, but attribute  
324 a reduction in energy intake to elevated concentrations of PYY. Finally, since there may be sex  
325 differences in the way exercise affects appetite regulatory hormones and appetite, it would be  
326 of value to also study female participants.

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459 **Table 1.** Effect of environmental temperature on appetite responses assessed using visual

460 analogue scales.

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462 Note. Values are mean ± SD, *n* = 11 (heat study), *n* = 10 (cool study). PFC, prospective food  
463 consumption.

	Preprandial (0 – 2 h) mm · 2h	Total trial (0 – 7 h) mm · 7h
<b>Hunger</b>		
Temperate	127 ± 10	258 ± 59
Heat	108 ± 15*	239 ± 82
Temperate	99 ± 40	247 ± 76
Cool	113 ± 32	258 ± 80
<b>Satisfaction</b>		
Temperate	42 ± 7	365 ± 23
Heat	50 ± 8	349 ± 52
Temperate	70 ± 4	379 ± 48
Cool	51 ± 23*	356 ± 67
<b>Fullness</b>		
Temperate	41 ± 7	361 ± 32
Heat	43 ± 8	358 ± 64
Temperate	58 ± 45	371 ± 54
Cool	45 ± 27	352 ± 72
<b>PFC</b>		
Temperate	154 ± 10	329 ± 54
Heat	135 ± 9*	317 ± 55
Temperate	118 ± 37	318 ± 72
Cool	129 ± 30	325 ± 69

464 \*Significantly lower than respective temperate trial (*p* < 0.05)

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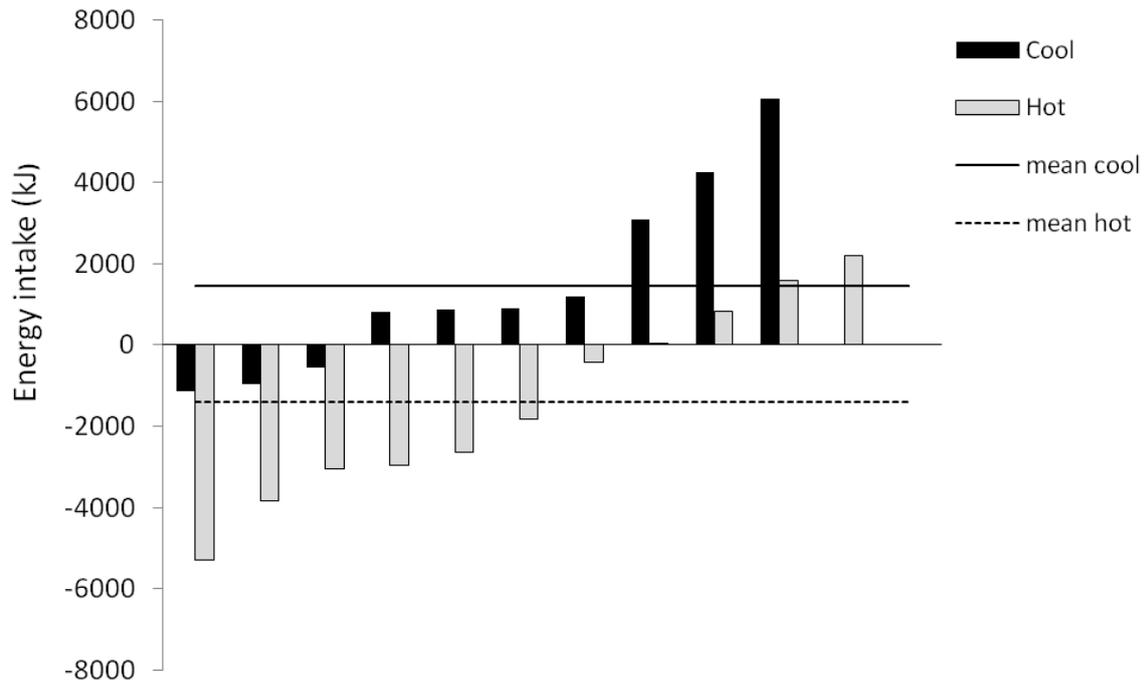
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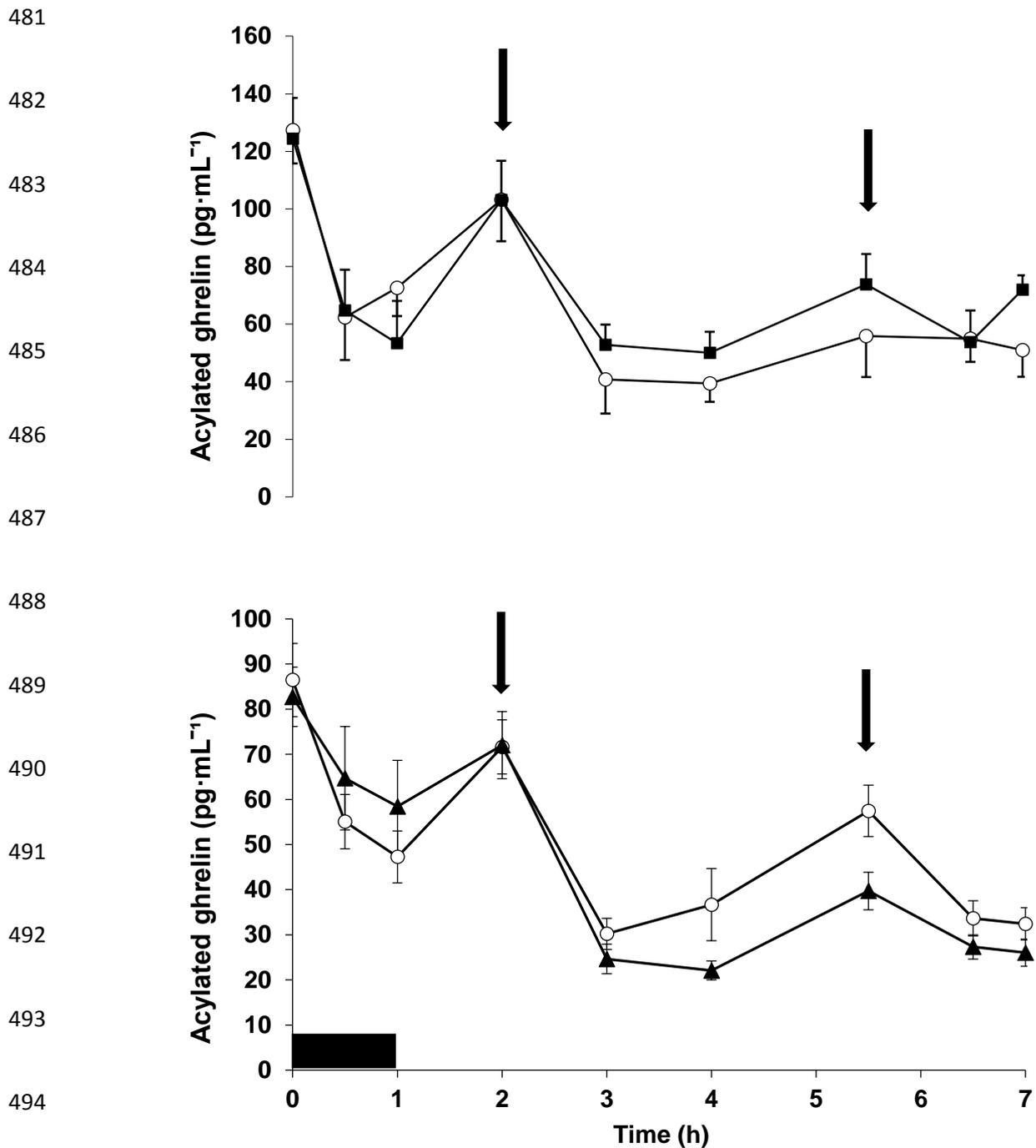
472 **Figures**



473

474 **Fig. 1.** Changes in energy intake (kJ) between temperate and cool trials (black columns,  $n =$   
 475 10) and temperate and hot trials (grey columns,  $n = 11$ ). Each column represents one participant.  
 476 Solid black line indicates the mean increase in energy intake in the cool trial compared with  
 477 the temperate trial, dashed black line indicates the mean decrease in energy intake in the hot  
 478 trial compared with the temperate trial; difference between studies  $P = 0.013$  (independent  
 479 samples T-test).

480



496 **Fig. 2.** Plasma acylated ghrelin concentrations during the temperate (○) and heat (■) trials (a),  
 497 and during the temperate (○) and cool (▲) trials (b). Values are mean ± SEM, (n = 10). The  
 498 black rectangle indicates the treadmill run and solid black arrows indicate the *ad libitum* buffet  
 499 meals.