

Let's Get Active!

Planning Effective Communication Strategies

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



Active transportation among adults

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor explores physical activity behaviours among adults (18 years and older). In addition, the study examines factors associated with activity levels such as the use of active modes of transportation. According to results from the most recent study year, less than half of Canadians say they walked (46%) and less than one quarter (18%) biked for at least 10 minutes at a time, when traveling to or from work, school, or to do errands, at least once in the past year.

There were some notable regional differences in the percentage of adults indicating that they use an active mode (walking or bicycling) when commuting to work, school or to do errands. Compared to the national average, fewer adults in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick say that they walked at least once within the past year while commuting, whereas those living in the Northwest Territories are more likely than the average to report this. Similarly, those living in the Northwest Territories and Yukon are more likely than Canadians overall to say that they bike.

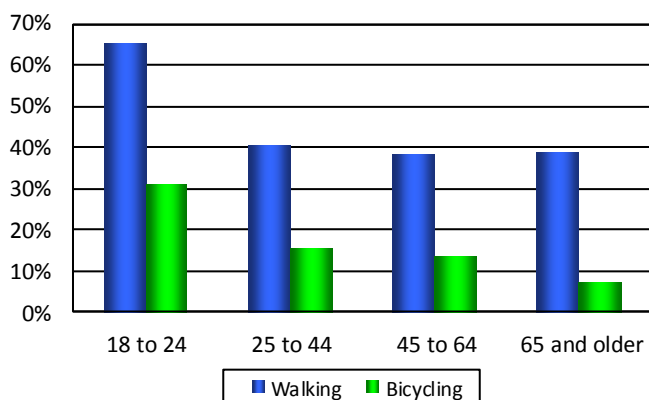
Although there are no significant differences among men and women in citing walking as a means of commuting to work, school or to do errands, men are more likely than women to say that they bike as a means of travel. Age-related differences in use of active transportation are also apparent. Specifically, young adults (aged 18 to 24 years) are most likely to use active modes for transportation (both walking and bicycling) compared to their older counterparts. Bicycling as a means of commuting generally decreases with increasing age group.

Fewer retirees report walking or bicycling as a means of transportation compared to the national average. Adults who are single or who have never been married are most likely to report using active modes for transportation (both walking and bicycling) compared to those who are married/common-law or previously married. Differences in the proportion citing the use of active modes for transportation do not significantly vary by education level.

Adults living in the highest income households are more likely to indicate that they bicycle compared to those living in some lower income households (\$20,000 to \$39,999 per year). The proportion who report walking as a means of travel generally increases with increasing community size. Similarly, those living in the largest communities (100,000 residents or more) are more likely than those from the smallest (<5,000 residents) to say that they bicycle.

FIGURE 1

Active transportation by age



2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Frequency of active commuting

Adults who indicated that they walk or bicycle to commute to school, work, or for errands at least once within the past year, were also asked about the frequency of days commuting actively. These values were divided into three categories of *infrequent*, *moderate* frequency, and *higher* frequency. For walking:

- *infrequent* represents ≤ 30 days per year (32% of those who walk indicated this);

- *moderate* frequency involves 31 to 149 days per year (29% report this);
- *most frequent* includes those who said 150 days or more per year (39% say this).

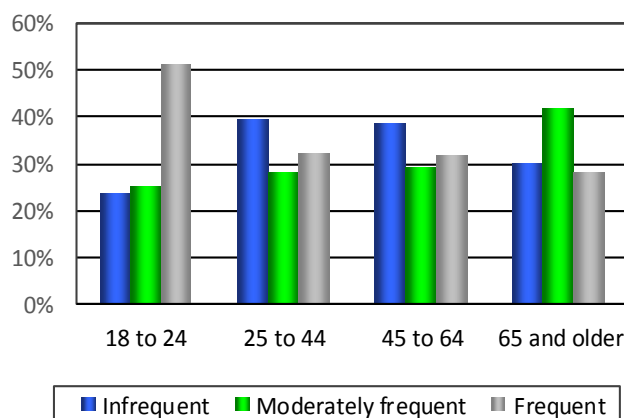
On the other hand, for bicycling as a means of commuting:

- *infrequent* incorporates ≤ 10 days per year (24% of those who bicycle report this);
- *moderate* frequency represents 10 to 39 days per year (35% indicate this);
- *most frequent* includes those who said 40 days or more per year (41% say this).

There are generally no differences by region in the frequency of days engaged in active modes of transportation. Although there are no gender-related differences in the frequency of bicycling or walking as modes of active transport, there are some age-related differences. Specifically, adults aged 18 to 24 are most likely to indicate the *most frequent* walking, and as such are less likely than those aged 25 to 64 to report *infrequent* walking. Older adults are most likely to say they walk a *moderate* amount. Among those who do use active modes of transportation, retirees are more likely than the average to say they walk a *moderate* amount, and are less likely to walk the *most frequent* amount. Those who are single or never married are also most likely to indicate that they walk the *most frequent*, whereas a greater proportion of married/common-law individuals walk *infrequently* compared to those who are single or never married.

FIGURE 2

Frequency of walking as a means of commuting by age



2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Those living in the largest communities ($\geq 500,000$ residents) are more likely to report walking and bicycling *more* frequently compared to those living in smaller communities ($< 5,000$ residents), and in different terms, are less likely than those from some smaller communities (30,000 to 100,000 residents for walking) to say they walk *infrequently*.

Duration

Adults who indicate that they have actively commuted for school, work, or errands at least once within the past year, were also asked the approximate duration per occasion. These values were divided into three categories. For walking:

- *lowest* duration represents less than 20 minutes and is reported by 25% of those who walk;
- *moderate* duration includes 20 to 34 minutes (46% indicate this value);
- *highest* duration is 35 minutes or higher (30% say this).

Among those who bicycle:

- *lowest* duration represents less than 20 minutes (19% say this);
- *moderate* duration includes 20 to 39 minutes (46% indicate this value);
- *highest* duration is 40 minutes or higher (35% report this).

Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of those living in the Northwest Territories report that they bicycle for the *lowest* duration. Otherwise, there are no significant regional differences related to the duration of commuting. Despite no significant differences in the duration of walking or bicycling by gender, age, household income, employment status, or marital status, differences do appear by education level and community size. Among individuals who walk, a greater proportion of those with a post-secondary education walk for a *moderate* duration each time, whereas those with less than a secondary level education are more likely to say that they walk for the *highest* duration. A greater proportion of residents in the largest communities walk a *moderate* duration compared to those in the smallest communities.

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