

Let's Get Active!

Physical Activity in Canadian Communities

2009 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES



Social norms and walking

There is strong evidence which shows that Canadians still do not accumulate enough physical activity for optimal health. Walking has been recognized as a relatively simple but effective means of accumulating sufficient levels of physical activity. Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommends 150 minutes of activity per week for adults. The 2009 Physical Activity and Sport Monitor examined the extent to which Canadians walked an equivalent of at least 150 minutes (in the particular case of this bulletin is at least 30 minutes per day, 5 times per week) leisure or transportation. Just under one-third (30%) of Canadians walk the equivalent of at least 150 minutes per week (here, 30 minutes per day, 5 times per week). The monitor also examined whether members of respondents' social circles include those who walk regularly (defined as at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week). Table 1 presents the overall proportions that agree to some extent or disagree that others they know walk regularly.

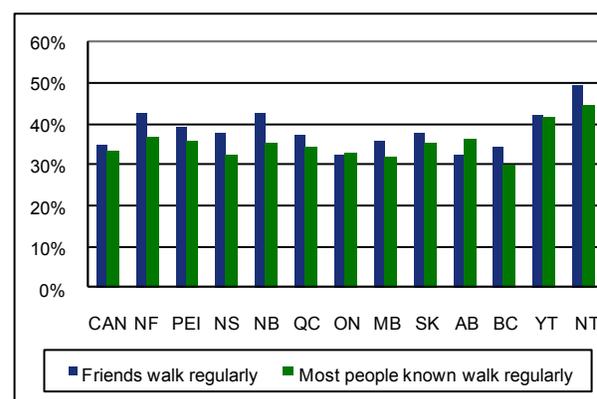
Region

With respect to achieving 150 minutes of walking per week, a greater proportion of residents from the Yukon walk this amount, compared to the national average. Regional differences related to social norms for walking also exist. Compared to the national average:

- relatively fewer residents of the Yukon and Northwest Territories disagree that family members walk regularly,
- a greater proportion of residents from the Northwest Territories agree that their friends and that most people they know walk regularly, and
- relatively fewer residents from New Brunswick disagree that their friends walk regularly.

FIGURE 1

Social norms by province, percentage agreeing to some extent, 2009



Physical Activity Monitor 2009, CFLRI

Age and sex

More women than men to report walking at least 150 minutes per week. In addition, more women than men agree to some extent that family members and friends walk regularly. A greater proportion of adults 25 years or older compared to 15 to 17 year olds report walking at least 150 minutes per week. However, a greater proportion of younger Canadians (15 to 17 year olds) agree that their friends walk regularly compared to those 25 years and older. A greater proportion of adults aged 45 to 64 years disagree that their friends walk regularly compared to young adults (18 to 24 years) and also disagree that family members walk regularly compared to older adults (65 years and older).

TABLE 1

Percentage that agree or disagree that people within their social circles walk regularly

	Agree	Disagree
Family members	50%	37%
Friends	35%	37%
Most people known	33%	41%
People in the neighbourhood	34%	33%

Physical Activity Monitor 2009, CFLRI

TABLE 2
Socio-demographic factors associated with social norms for walking

	A greater proportion agreeing	A greater proportion disagreeing
Family members		-Post-secondary (vs. less than high school) -Higher income households (vs. lowest)
Friends	-Less than high school education (vs. higher) -Lowest income households (vs. higher) -Students -Those from small communities (<10,000 residents vs. largest)	-Highest income households -Those from largest communities (vs. smallest) -Full-time employees
Most people known	-Decreases with increasing education -Lowest income households (vs. highest) -Residents of the smallest communities (vs. larger)	-Increases with increasing education -Highest income households (vs. \$20,000-\$29,999)
People in the neighbourhood	-Less than high school education (vs. university educated)	-Highest income households (vs. \$20,000-\$29,999) -Retirees

Physical Activity Monitor 2009, CFLRI

Socio-demographic characteristics

Individuals with less than a high school education are generally the least likely to report walking at least 150 minutes per week. Table 2 presents socio-demographic characteristics of those that are more likely to agree or disagree that those in their social circles walk regularly.

Activity level

Unsurprisingly, reporting sufficient walking per week increases with increasing activity level. Furthermore, a greater proportion of active Canadians compared to those who are less active indicate that family members and friends walk regularly. There are no significant differences with sport participation.

Trends

There are no differences since 2007 in the overall proportion who meet an equivalent of 150 minutes per week of walking. The

proportions that say that others in their social circle walk regular (i.e.: family members, friends and most people they know) have decreased in 2009.

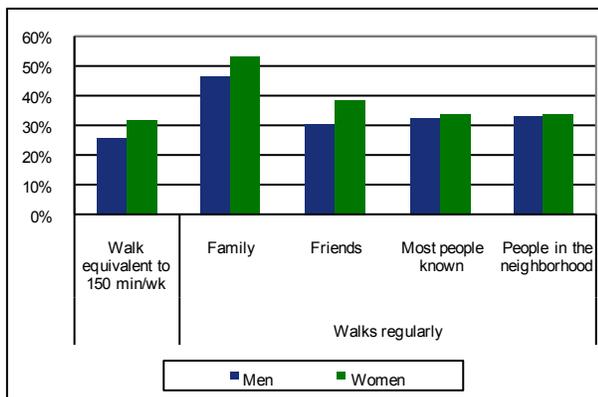
Generally, relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and reporting that family, friends or most people known walk regularly has not changed since 2007, with the following exceptions:

A relationship between education, gender, and activity level appear in 2009 with respect to agreement that family walk regularly. However, these relationships were not significant in 2007. There has been a decrease within Quebec since 2007 in the proportion agreeing that family walk regularly.

A greater proportion of individuals from lowest income households agree that their friends walk regularly in 2009, however, this relationship was not evident in 2007.

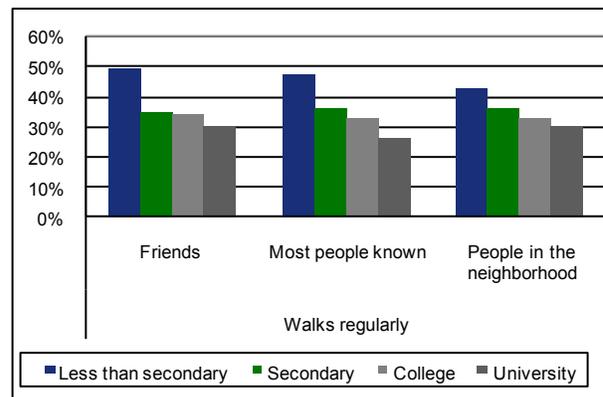
There has been a decrease since 2007 in the proportion of residents in Ontario and Alberta indicating agreement that friends and *most people known* walk regularly.

FIGURE 2
Walking and social norms for walking (percentage agreeing) by gender, 2009



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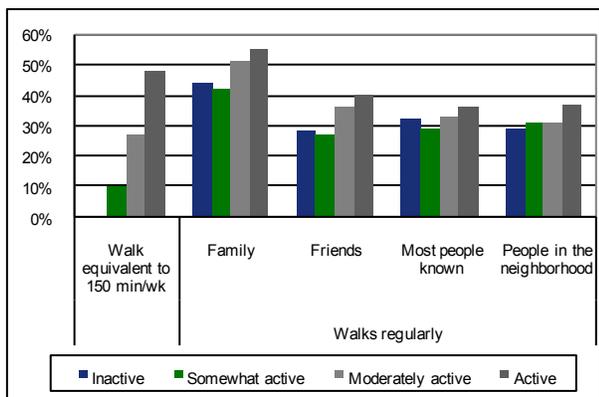
FIGURE 3
Social norms for walking (percentage agreeing) by education, 2009



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FIGURE 4

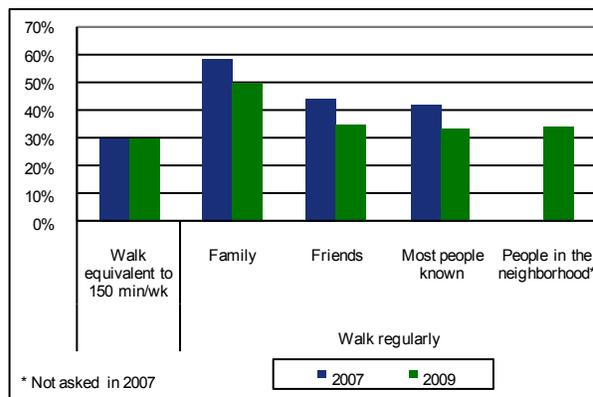
Walking and social norms for walking (percentage agreeing) activity level, 2009



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FIGURE 5

Walking behaviour and social norms for walking (percentage agreeing), overall trends, 2007-2009



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