

Let's Get Active!

Physical Activity in Canadian Communities

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



Places to safely walk

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor asked Canadian adults (18 years and older) specifically about a range of facilities in their community where they may participate in physical activity and sport. This particular research bulletin examines Canadians' perspectives about the amount of places to safely walk in their community, the level of satisfaction with the amount of places to safely walk, and finally, their usage of such places. Each of these factors are explored in relation to key socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, household income level, employment and marital status, region, and community characteristics.

Amount of places to safely walk

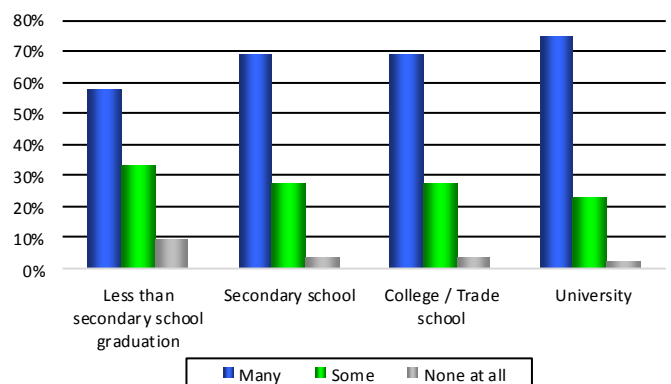
When asked about the amount of places in the local community where they can safely walk such as walking trails or sidewalks, 71% of Canadian adults indicated that there are *many*, 26% reported *some*, and only 3% said that there are *none* of these places *at all* to safely walk.

Individual characteristics Although no significant differences exist by age, a greater proportion of men indicate that there are *many*, whereas a greater proportion of women say that there are *some* places in their community where they can safely walk. Although there are no significant differences by marital status, relatively fewer adults who are not working for a specific reason (e.g., unemployed, on leave, illness or injury) report that there are *many*, yet are more likely to say that there are *some* safe places to walk in their community compared to the national average.

Generally speaking there is an increase in the percentage of adults who indicate that there are *many* safe places to walk in the community with increasing education level. Relatively more adults who have not graduated from high school, however, indicate that there are *some* safe places to walk in their community compared to those with a university education. Furthermore, adults who have not graduated from high school are most likely to indicate that there are *no* safe places *at all* to walk in their community compared to adults with higher education.

FIGURE 1

Amount of safe places to walk by education level



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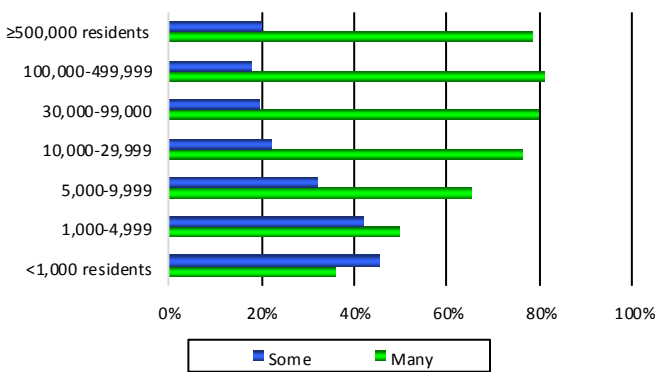
Household or community characteristics Similar to education, there is a general increase in the proportion of adults who report the availability of *many* places to be active in the community with increasing household income.

Relatively more adults from the lowest income households (<\$20,000 per year) indicate that there are *some* places to safely walk in their community compared to those living in the highest income households (≥\$100,000 per year).

There is a general increasing pattern in the proportion of adults who indicate that there are *many* places to safely walk with increasing size of the community (e.g., from 36% among those living in the smallest communities of less than a 1,000 residents to 79% of residents living in the largest communities in the country), whereas this relationship is reversed for those indicating *some* availability. Compared to the average, adults living rurally are least likely to indicate that there are *many* places in their community where they can safely walk, whereas a higher proportion of rural adults say that there are either *some* or *no* places *at all* in their community to safely walk.

FIGURE 2

Amount of safe places to walk by community size



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Region Compared to the average, relatively fewer adults living in the Atlantic (more specifically Nova Scotia or New Brunswick) say that there are *many*, whereas a higher percentage report *some* places to safely walk in their community. The opposite relationship exists in British Columbia where a greater proportion of adults indicate that there are *many*, yet relatively fewer indicate that there are *some* places to safely walk in their community. Compared to the national average, a substantially higher proportion of adults living in the Yukon cite the availability of *many* safe places to walk in their community.

Degree of satisfaction with the amount of places to safely walk

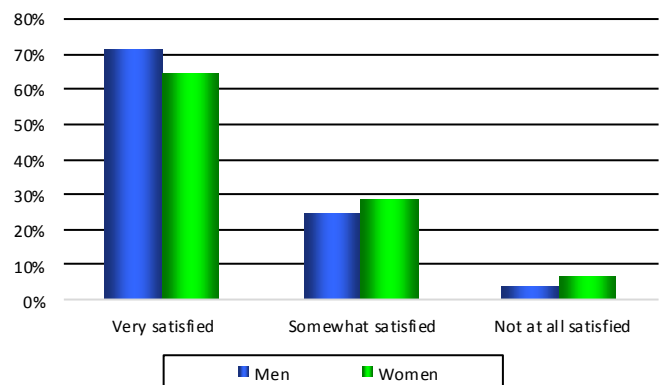
The 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor then asked adults about their degree of satisfaction with the amount of places to safely walk in their community.

As such, 68% indicated that they are *very* satisfied, 27% are *somewhat* satisfied, and the remaining 5% are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of places to safely walk in their local community.

Individual characteristics A higher percentage of men indicate that they are *very* satisfied, whereas relatively more women say that they are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of places where they can safely walk in their community. Perceptions of satisfaction also vary by age; a greater proportion of older adults (65 years and older) report that they are *very* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk in the community compared to 25 to 64 year olds. Although there are no significant differences in the degree of satisfaction with the amount of places to walk by marital status, there is a relationship with employment status. A higher percentage of retirees report being *very* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk in their community compared to the national average. Conversely, a greater proportion of adults who are not working for a particular reason (e.g., unemployment, leave, illness or injury) indicate that they are *not at all* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk when compared to the average. A higher percentage of university educated adults indicate that they are *very* satisfied with the amount of places to safely walk in their community compared to those who have not graduated from high school, yet the opposite relationship exists indicating that they are *not at all* satisfied.

FIGURE 3

Satisfaction with places to safely walk by gender

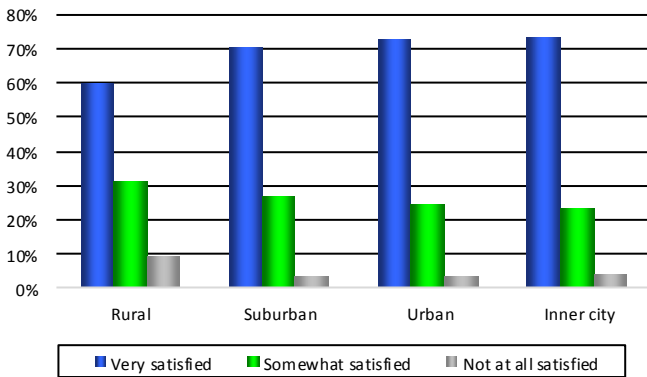


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Household or community characteristics A greater proportion of adults living in higher income households (\$60,000 or higher) report that they are *very* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk in the community compared to those living in the lowest income households (<\$20,000 per year).

On the contrary, relatively more adults living in the lowest income households say that they are *somewhat* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk compared to those living in the highest income households. Residents living in small communities (<5,000 residents) are less likely to be *very* satisfied with the number of places to walk, but are more likely to be *somewhat* or *not at all* satisfied. Relatively fewer rural residents report being *very* satisfied with the number of places to safely walk in their community, whereas relatively more urban dwellers indicate this compared to the average. Conversely, rural dwellers are more likely than average to say that they are *not at all* satisfied, whereas suburban and urban dwellers are less likely than average to state this.

FIGURE 4
Satisfaction with places to safely walk by community location



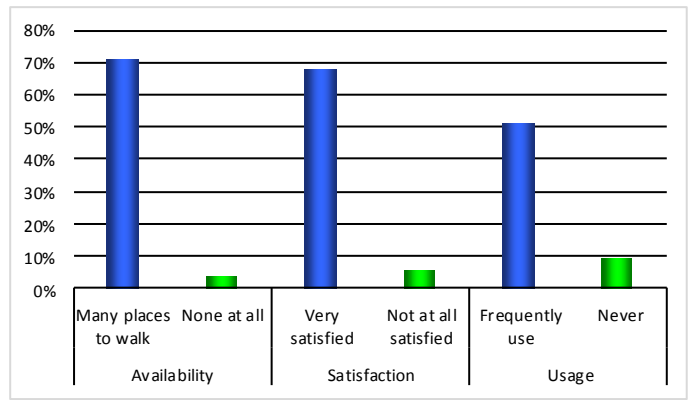
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Region Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador are *not at all* satisfied with the amount of places to safely walk in their community. Relatively more residents of Quebec and relatively fewer residents of Ontario indicate that they are *somewhat* satisfied with the amount of places to safely walk when compared to the national average. Compared to the national average, significant differences in levels of satisfaction with the amount of places to walk also exist in some of the northern territories. For example, a greater proportion of adults living in the Yukon indicate that they are *very* satisfied, yet fewer indicate that they are *somewhat* satisfied compared to the average; on the contrary, relatively fewer adults living in the Northwest Territories say that they are *very* satisfied, yet relatively more say that they are *somewhat* satisfied with the amount of places to safely walk in their communities.

Usage of places to safely walk

Lastly, adults participating in the survey were asked about their usage of these safe places to walk in their community (e.g., walking trails, sidewalks). According to the 2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, just over half of adults (51%) indicate that they *frequently* use these places, 40% *sometimes* do, and 9% *never* do.

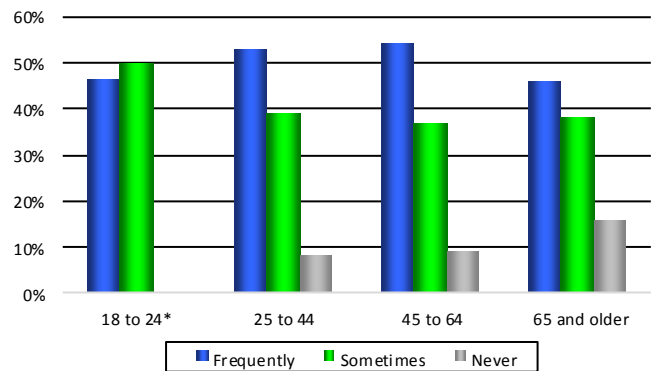
FIGURE 5
Amount, satisfaction, and usage of places to safely walk, overall



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Individual characteristics Despite there being no significant differences by gender, usage of safe places to walk in the community does vary by age. Relatively more young adults (18 to 24 years) report *sometimes* using these places compared to adults 45 years and older. A higher percentage of adults aged 45 to 64 report *frequent* use of these places when compared to their older counterparts (65 years and older). In fact, older adults (65 years and older) are most likely to say that they *never* use these types of places to walk at 16%.

FIGURE 6
Usage of places to safely walk by age



*Data not released due to sample size

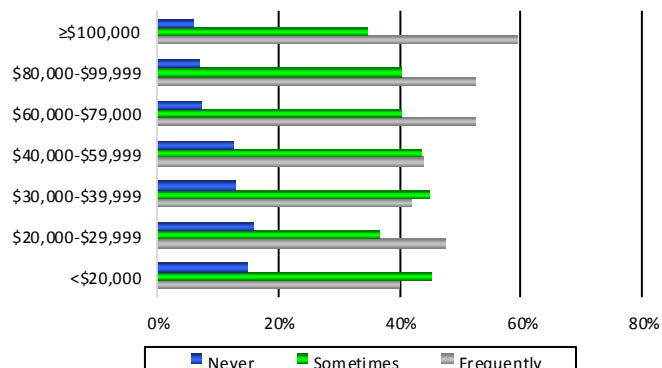
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A greater proportion of adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated report *never* using these places to walk compared to those who are married or living with a partner, who in turn are more likely than those who are single or never married to say that they *never* use these places. On the contrary, relatively more adults who are married or living with a partner say that they *frequently* use these places to walk compared to those who are widowed, divorced, or separated. Regarding employment status, a greater proportion of retirees or adults who are not working for a particular reason report *never* using these places to walk compared to the national average. Adults with a university education are most likely to report that they *frequently* use these places to walk, whereas those who have not graduated from high school are most likely to say that they *never* use these places.

Household or community characteristics A higher percentage of adults living in the highest income households ($\geq \$100,000$ per year) say that they *frequently* use these places to walk compared to adults living in lower income households ($< \$60,000$), whereas the opposite relationship exists for those *never* using these places. Compared to the national average, relatively fewer residents of smaller communities ($< 5,000$ residents) say that they *frequently* use these places to walk, whereas they are more likely to *never* use these places. Conversely, relatively more adults living in the largest communities indicate using these places to walk on a *frequent* basis when compared to the average. Compared to the average, a higher percentage of rural adults *never* use these places to walk in their communities, whereas a lower proportion of urban dwelling residents report this. On the contrary, relatively more urban dwelling adults *frequently* use these places to walk, yet relatively fewer adults living in rural environments cite this.

FIGURE 7

Usage of places to safely walk by household income



2016-2018 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Region Compared to the national average, a slightly higher percentage of residents living in the Atlantic, yet a slightly lower proportion of those living in the North report that they *never* use these places in their community to walk. A higher percentage of adults living in the Yukon Territory *frequently* use these places to walk. Conversely, relatively fewer adults living in New Brunswick indicate that they *frequently* use these places in their community to walk when compared to the average.

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