



Results from the 2002 Western Australian Adult Physical Activity Survey: Key Findings for Occupation

The Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce

In November 2002, the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) undertook a state-wide survey to measure physical activity levels of Western Australian adults. This fact sheet presents major findings from this survey among different occupational categories.

Sample

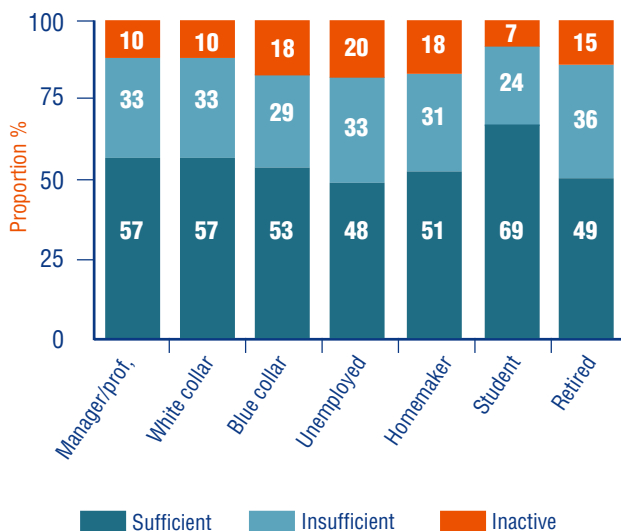
Of the total sample (n = 3,200) completing the physical activity survey, 23.9% were managers/professionals, 16.7% white collar workers, 17.5% blue collar workers, 2.3% unemployed, 13.3% were homemakers, 5.1% students and 20.1% retired.

Levels of Physical Activity

Figure 1 presents the proportion of adults in each occupation category who were:

- **Sufficiently active** (≥ 150 minutes of moderate activity over 5 or more days or ≥ 60 minutes of vigorous activity per week);
- **Insufficiently active** (some physical activity but less than sufficient), and;
- **Inactive** (no physical activity).

Figure 1. Levels of Physical Activity by Occupation

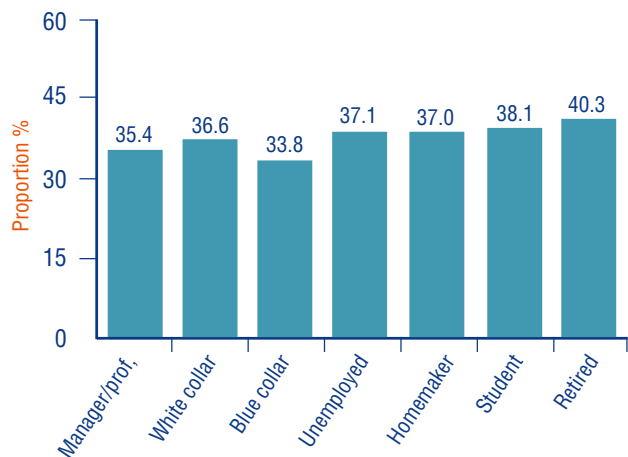


A higher proportion of students were sufficiently active (69.3%) and lower proportions insufficiently active (23.9%) and inactive (6.9%), compared with all other occupational categories. The highest prevalence of inactivity was observed among the unemployed (19.8%), blue collar workers (18%) and homemakers (17.9%).

Participation in Sufficient Moderate and Vigorous Physical Activity by Education

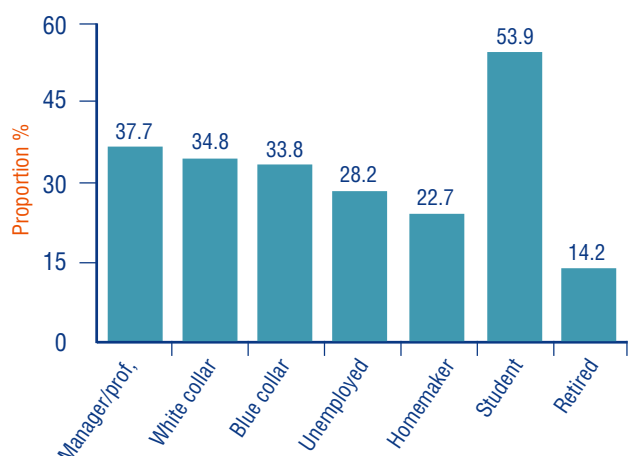
Figures 2 and 3 present the proportion of adults by occupational category participating in sufficient moderate (≥ 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on 5 or more days per week) and vigorous (≥ 60 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week) physical activity.

Figure 2. Levels of Sufficient Moderate Physical Activity by Occupation



Small differences in the proportion of adults participating in sufficient moderate physical activity were found between occupational categories. Blue collar workers had the lowest proportion of adults participating in sufficient moderate physical activity (33.8%) and retirees had the highest proportion (40.3%).

Figure 3. Levels of Sufficient Vigorous Physical Activity by Occupation





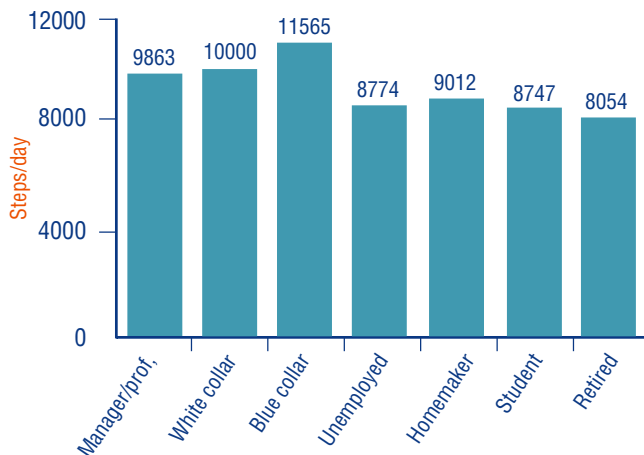
A higher proportion of students (53.9%) and a lower proportion of retirees (14.2%) participated in sufficient levels of vigorous physical activity compared to all other occupational categories.

Pedometer Results

Figure 4 presents the average daily steps performed by each occupational category.



Figure 4. Average Daily Steps by Occupation Category



Blue collar workers performed the highest number of steps per day (11,565 steps) and retirees performed the least number of steps per day (8,054 steps).

The proportion of adults performing 10,000 steps per day for each occupational category was: Manager/professional (45.3%); white collar (45.6%); blue collar (74.7%); unemployed (30.8%); homemaker (39.4%); student (45.2%) and retiree (26.7%).

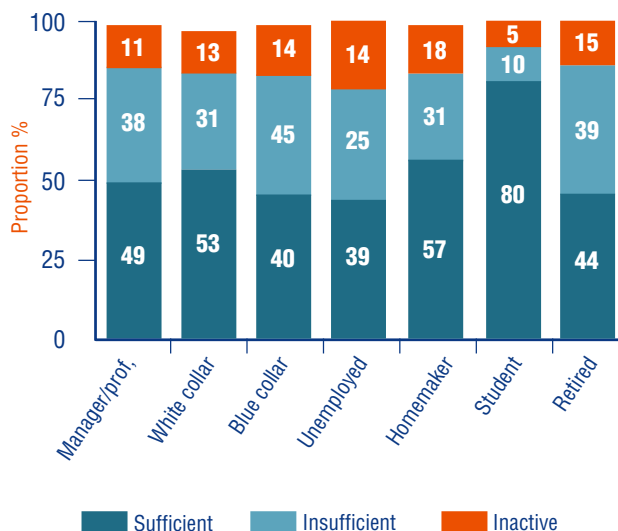
Overweight and Obesity

Self-reported height and weight data were used to determine body mass indices (BMI) for each survey participant (weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared). The following categories were used to define weight¹:

- <18.50 underweight
- 18.50-24.99 healthy weight
- 25.00-29.99 overweight
- ≥ 30.00 obese

The prevalence for each of these BMI categories for each occupational category is presented in Figure 5 (underweight category not shown).

Figure 5. Level of BMI by Occupation



A lower proportion of students were overweight (9.5%) and obese (5.2%) compared to all other occupational categories. A higher proportion of unemployed were obese (20%) compared to all other occupational categories.

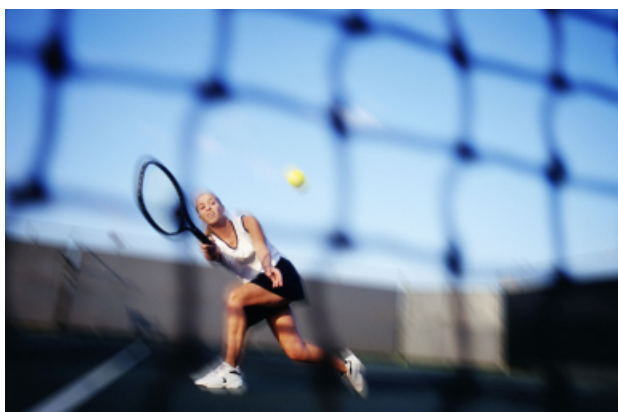
Recommendations

Recommendations for increasing levels of sufficient physical activity in Western Australia, as well as key findings from the 2002 Western Australian Adult Physical Activity Survey and Pedometer Study² can be found at the PATF website (www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au) or by contacting the PATF Secretariat on 9382 5980.

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Department of Health
Department of Sport
and Recreation



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¹ World Health Organisation (2001). Obesity: Preventing and Managing the Global Epidemic. WHO Technical Series: No. 894. Geneva: WHO; 2000.

² McCormack G, Milligan R, Giles-Corti B, & Clarkson J. (2003). Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2002. Results from the Adult Physical Activity Survey and Pedometer Study. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.