



Patrimoine
canadien

Canadian
Heritage

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY
OF BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, MOTIVATIONS AND CAPACITY
RELATED TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG THE
CANADIAN POPULATION.**

Executive Summary

Prepared for Canadian Heritage

Supplier: Leger Marketing Inc.

Contract Number: CW2342784

Contract Value: \$119,859.10 (including HST)

Award Date: 2023-12-20

Delivery Date: March 28, 2024

Registration Number: POR 106-23

For more information, please contact Canadian Heritage at por-rop@pch.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

Canada

Physical Activity Monitor: A cross-sectional study of beliefs, attitudes, motivations and capacity related to sport and physical activity among the Canadian population – Executive Summary

This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey conducted by Léger Marketing Inc. on behalf of Canadian Heritage. The quantitative research was conducted between February and March 2024.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre :

Moniteur d'activité physique : une étude transversale des croyances, attitudes, motivations et capacités à l'égard du sport et l'activité physique parmi la population canadienne — Sommaire Exécutif

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Canadian Heritage's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Canadian Heritage
Policy Research Group
15 Eddy Street
Gatineau QC J9X 4B3
Telephone: 1-866-811-0055
Email: info@pch.gc.ca

Catalogue Number: CH24-54/2024E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-71637-4

Related publications (registration number: POR 106-23): CH24-54/2024F-PDF

Catalogue Number: (Final Report, French): 978-0-660-71638-1

1. Executive Summary

Leger is pleased to present this report to Canadian Heritage on the findings from the 2024 Physical Activity Monitor quantitative survey, designed to learn about the beliefs, attitudes, motivations and capacity towards sport and physical activity among the Canadian population. The survey results cannot be reliably applied to the entire target population, as the sampling method employed does not ensure the sample accurately reflects the target group within a known margin of error. Reported percentages are not generalizable to any group other than the sample studied, and therefore no formal statistical inferences can be drawn between the sample results and the broader target population it may be intended to reflect.

This report was prepared by Leger who was contracted by Canadian Heritage (contract number CW2342784 awarded December 20, 2023). This contract has a value of \$119,859.10 (including HST).

1.1 Background and Objectives

Regular physical activity is effective in the prevention of various chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, some cancers, and osteoporosis. It also provides benefits such as improved muscular and cardiorespiratory fitness, weight maintenance, improved mental health, stress reduction, and improved academic performance (WHO, 2018; Lee et al., 2012). Sport participation contributes economically and societally through potential increases of social cohesion and social capital. Despite these important health and societal benefits, very few adults (25%) participate in sport (CFLRI, 2018, Conference Board of Canada, 2005). Differences in participation exist by gender and age, with women participating less regularly than men and participation decreasing with increasing age (CFLRI, 2018). Understanding the reasons for the disparities are important for initiatives focusing on increasing population participation rates and for reducing gender disparities.

The Physical Activity and Sport Monitoring Program (PASMP) is a nationwide surveillance system dedicated to examining sport, physical activity and recreation. The PASMP explores participation rates and a wide variety of outcomes and correlates related to sport, physical activity, and recreation, with the goal of providing evidence to shape policy and to measure impact. The PASMP utilizes information collected from the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) population surveys, surveys of settings, sport and recreation organizations, and governments, and is used to address data gaps in sport, physical activity and recreation, as outlined in evaluation of the national policies (CPRA/ISRC, 2015; Federal, provincial, and territorial governments, 2018; Government of Canada, Canadian Heritage, 2012). The PASMP uses a theoretical approach to explore intra-personal, inter-personal, physical environment, and policy level factors in relation to sub-populations of various gender, ages, cultures, income, and abilities. The Physical Activity Monitor (PAM), originally developed by CLFRI, is a key source of information for the PASMP. The 2023 PAM, led by Sport Canada, will collect similar data and compare it to CLFRI data collected over multiple fiscal years (yielding trends in data) and will examine factors such as the knowledge of the required amount of physical activity, attitudes, benefits, barriers, motivation, capacity, opportunities, self-efficacy, and intention.

The research explored participation rates on a wide variety of sports and physical activities, with the aim of providing evidence to shape policy and measure impact. It helped to shed light on differences in opportunities, access, and levels of participation in sport between different populations.

The research supported Core Responsibility 3 (Sport) in the Department of Canadian Heritage Departmental Results Framework (DRF). It will enable Sport Canada to obtain disaggregated data to measure the following DRF result: Canadians, regardless of gender, physical ability, and cultural background, who participate in sport activities, are satisfied with the way the activity is provided. The surveys further addressed data gaps in Sport Canada's reporting indicators as captured in the Sport Canada Performance Information Profile (PIP).

The survey addressed the Ministers' commitment to "...strengthen their 2019 commitment to increase the participation of women and girls in sport and ensure it remains a priority" and to "develop a strategy for publicly reporting on data related to progress". The survey also align with the Government's commitment to achieve gender equity in sport at every level by 2035.

The objectives of the study were to assess the changes in participation rates of physical activity and sport (participation rates, frequency, and regularity) and in attitudes and behaviours related to physical activity and sport. This project aims to provide critical evidence for decision-makers, policy-makers, program and service providers, and health promoters to support policy and programming to help particular sub-populations overcome perceived barriers. In addition, this ongoing surveillance will allow for assessment towards the 2035 gender equity target through the Government of Canada (Canadian Heritage, 2021), and for Canada's response to the 2030 goal of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and targets (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2020). The data can also assist in informing potential changes in the renewal process of national policies, strategies and frameworks, and can also provide a baseline assessment for national communications campaigns or program initiatives.

1.2 Methodology

This quantitative research was conducted through online surveys using Computer Aided Web Interviewing (CAWI) technology. The online survey was conducted from February 14th to March 5th 2024. The participation rate for the survey was 13.3%. Calculation of the Web survey's participation rate is presented in Appendix A.

A first round of pre-testing was done on February 14th to ensure correct programming of the survey. Minor corrections, such as the addition of the question on mother tongue as well as the modification of the answer choices for the questions on age and income to follow quotas, were applied. A second round of pre-testing was completed on February 15th to validate the changes. After the second pre-test, no changes were made to the questionnaire. On average, the survey lasted 13 minutes. In total, 61 Canadians aged 18 and over were surveyed for the pre-test (27 in English, 34 in French).

Overall, 11,060 Canadians aged 18 or older were surveyed across Canada.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents in each area:

Table 1. Sample Distribution by Region

Region	Number of respondents
British Columbia	1,531 (13.8%)
Alberta	1,232 (11.1%)
Prairies (Manitoba and Saskatchewan)	752 (6.3%)
Ontario	4,156 (38.6%)
Quebec	2,587 (23.0%)
Atlantic (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick)	775 (6.6%)
Territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut)	27 (0.2%)
Total	11,060

Based on the most recent data from Statistics Canada’s 2021 national census, Leger weighted the results of this survey by age, gender, region, language, education, income, presence of children in the household, if respondents identified as being in the BIPOC community or not and if respondents have a disability or not.

Details regarding the weighting procedures can be found in Appendix A.

As a member of the Canadian Research and Insights Council (CRIC), Leger adheres to the stringent guidelines for quantitative research and acts in accordance with the Government of Canada’s requirements for quantitative research and Standards of the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research. The details of the methodology and more information on Leger’s quality control mechanisms are presented in Appendix A. The questionnaire is available in Appendix B.

1.3 Overview of Quantitative Findings

KEY FINDINGS

Physical and mental health condition

- More than half of respondents (63%) said that their physical health is good (52%) or excellent (11%), while 66% shared that their mental health condition is good or excellent (good: 45%; excellent: 21%). On the other hand, less than a tenth of respondents said that their physical health (8%) and their mental health (9%) was poor.

Aerobic and strength-training activities

- A vast majority of respondents did some form of aerobic activities in the past 7 days, whether at a mild (78%), moderate (67%), or heavy intensity (43%). The median time spent on mild and moderate intensity aerobic activity was 30 minutes, and 25 minutes for heavy intensity. On the other hand, over a third of respondents (36%) performed strength-training activities.

Participation in sport(s)

- Slightly more than a quarter of respondents (26%) have participated in sport in the past 12 months. Most of them were involved as a player (85%). Soccer (19%), ice hockey (15%) and basketball (15%) were the three most popular sports played in the past year. Most respondents participated in their sport at least once a week (80%).

- Less than half of respondents who had participated in sports in the past 12 months (46%) mentioned that their sport(s) was/were primarily played in a structured or organized environments (e.g., private facilities, through a sports club or through the community).
- Clothing and footwear (59%), membership or registration fee (50%) and equipment (49%) were the most purchased items by respondents who engaged in sport.
- Almost half of respondents who participated in sports in the past 12 months (49%) trained and competed for their sport(s), mainly at a local or community level (80%), while 31% had a coach for their sport(s).

Information about sport and physical activity

- Television (22%) is the most popular media where respondents most often saw or heard information about sport or physical activity. However, when it came to trying to find information on sport or physical activity to help them increase their participation, respondents mentioned mainly the internet and other web pages (36%), followed by YouTube (22%), local facility or organization (22%), and friends or family (21%), before television (14%).
- Benefits of exercise/physical activity (16%) as well as accessibility of community centres, activities, or sport events (13%) are the main information that help respondents increase their participation in sport.

Opinion towards statements related to sports or physical activity

- Slightly more than three-quarters of respondents (76%) agreed that they have the psychological ability to be active, and 69% said that being active helped manage their mental and physical health. Otherwise, 65% of respondents stated having the physical opportunity and 64% stated having the physical ability to be physically active.
- More than half of respondents stated having the social opportunity (58%) and the motivation (54%) to be active.

Difficulties doing certain activities for respondents with a disability

- When doing certain activities, 69% of respondents with a disability stated they had difficulty walking or climbing steps, while 59% had difficulty remembering or concentrating, 49% had difficulty seeing, 37% had difficulty with self-care, 33% had difficulty with hearing, and 24% had difficulty communicating.
- However, three-in-four respondents with a disability (77%) mentioned that they are free to make their own choices, and two thirds agreed that they do what is desirable for them (65%). Around half of them felt a sense of purpose when engaging in sport or exercise (53%), felt confident in their skills/abilities (49%), and felt accepted by others (47%). However, four-in-ten agreed that they felt they fit in (40%).

Confidence in the ability to be physically active

- Respondents were confident about the possibility to be active and still spend the time they want with their family (61%) as well as their ability to do a total of 150 minutes or more of physical activity per week (55%).

Personal control to fit regular physical activity into one's lifestyle

- Less than half of respondents felt that they had a lot (30%) or complete (21%) control over whether they are able to fit regular physical activity into their lifestyle.

- Over half of Canadians have a positive opinion on sport and physical activity with 57% finding it fun and 82% finding them beneficial. Otherwise, 43% were comfortable participating in sport or physical activity and 37% found them easy.

Opinion on sport or physical activity

- Around two thirds of respondents find sport and physical activity safe (65%) or fair, respectful, ethical (62%), and over half find them available (57%), welcoming and inclusive (54%). Otherwise, 42% found them convenient or accessible and 35% found them affordable.

Intention to be physically active in the next six months

- Only a minority of Canadians had no intention (4%) or little intention (8%) to be physically active in the next six months. On the other hand, 39% fully intend to be physically active in the next six months.

Main reason to be active in the next six months

- The most common reasons to want to be active in the next six months are to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight (26%), to maintain functional ability with age (22%), especially among those over 55 years old (41%), and to stay fit and build strength (19%).

Barrier to the participation in physical activity or sport

- Lack of free time is the main hurdle to participating in physical activity or sport (22%), followed by health issues and physical limitations (18%), and lack of self-motivation/willpower (13%).

Places or settings most often used in the community

- Sidewalks, side of the road, and the neighbourhood (46%), along with walking trails or paths (44%) were the most commonly used places in the community for physical activity.

Volunteer activity related to sport

- Around 11% has done some type of volunteer activity related to sport in the past 12 months, while 25% did do so in the past but not in the past 12 months.
- Those who did volunteer in an activity related to sport did so for an average of 63 hours, with those aged 55 and over volunteering significantly more (98 hours).
- Most of those who did volunteer in the past 12 months did so in person (71%).
- Volunteering as a coach or assistant coach (32%) and fundraising duties (20%) were the most common duties fulfilled by volunteers.
- A little less than half have been volunteering for 3 years or less (45%), while 25% have been doing so for 10 years or more.
- Most of those who volunteered in the past 12 months had good experiences with their training with 74% thinking the amount of time spent on training was adequate, 68% considered they received adequate training to conduct their duties, and 36% thought the amount of time spent on training was excessive.
- For those who have volunteered in the past but not in the past 12 months, lack of free time was the main reason they stopped (34%).

1.4 Notes on interpretation of the research findings

The views and observations expressed in this document do not reflect those of Canadian Heritage. This report was compiled by Leger, based on the research conducted specifically for this project.

1.5 Political neutrality certification

Research Firm: Leger Marketing Inc. (Leger)

Contract Number: CW2342784

Contract award date: 2023-12-20

Leger Marketing Inc. hereby certifies that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and the Directive on the Management of Communications. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Signed:

Christian Bourque

Senior Researcher, Léger

Date: March 28, 2024