

## Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey

### Fact Sheet: Satisfaction with Time Use

by Karine Leclerc and Rachel Leistra

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## Note to readers

The Time Use Survey (TUS) is a cross-sectional survey under the General Social Statistics Program and has been conducted since 1986. Data for the 2022 TUS were collected from July 2022 to July 2023.

The survey has a target population of non-institutionalized persons and non-residents of First Nations reserves aged 15 years and older, living in the 10 provinces of Canada. The TUS collects information in a 24-hour time diary on how respondents spent their time during the day, including what they were doing, how long they did it for and who else was present during each activity. The survey also collects additional information on well-being and time pressure, paid work, transportation, and sociodemographic characteristics.

Persons with disabilities were identified using the short version of the Disability Screening Questions (DSQ), which was included in the 2022 TUS.

For more information about this survey (questionnaires, definitions, data sources and methods used), please see [Surveys and statistical programs – Time Use Survey](#).

# Fact Sheet: Satisfaction with Time Use

by **Karine Leclerc** and **Rachel Leistra**

Time is a finite resource; how satisfied are people in Canada with how they use their limited time? Measuring satisfaction with time use provides a valuable understanding about how a person perceives their time spent across their day in activities such as paid work, unpaid work and care, leisure, sleep, transportation, and so on. Indeed, satisfaction with time use is a headline indicator in assessing subjective well-being in Canada's [Quality of Life Framework](#) and is a recommended measure of well-being [internationally](#).

Using data from the 2022 Time Use Survey, this paper sheds light on Canadians' quality of life by providing a short overview of the indicator "satisfaction with time use". Results show that reporting high satisfaction with time use differs depending on factors such as age, disability, and the region of Canada in which a person lives.

## How satisfaction with time use is measured

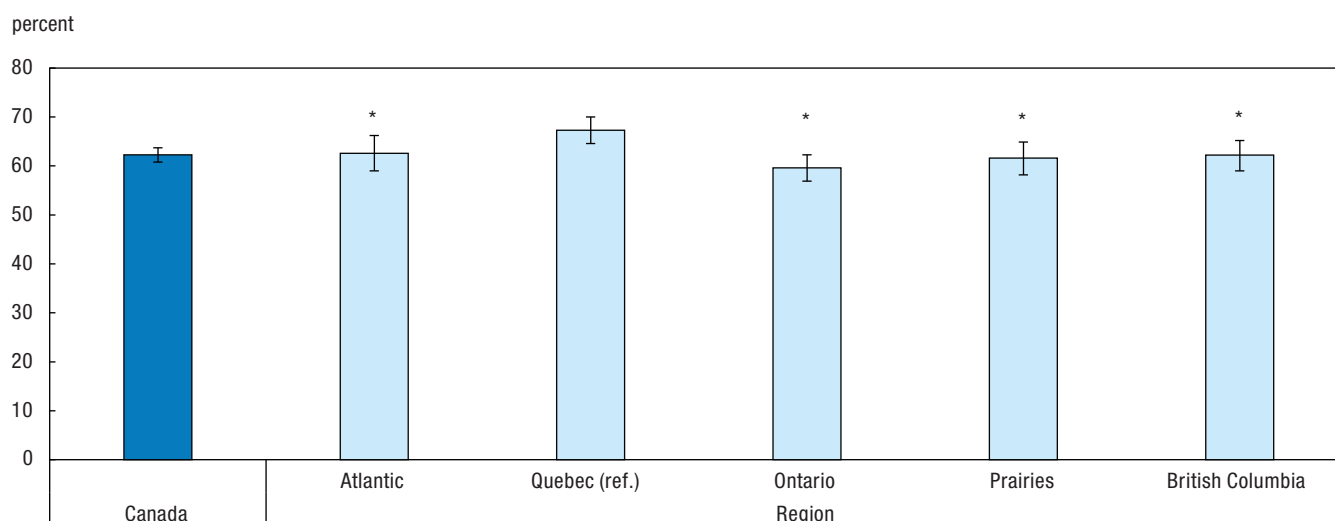
Satisfaction with time use measures how individuals aged 15 years and older rate their satisfaction with their use of time on a scale from 0 ("very dissatisfied") to 10 ("very satisfied").

Low satisfaction with time use reflects a value of 0-3, moderate satisfaction reflects a value of 4-6, and high satisfaction reflects a value of 7-10.

## In Canada, almost two thirds of people report high satisfaction with time use

A majority of persons (62.3%) in Canada reported that they were highly satisfied with their use of time. This proportion did not vary much across regions in Canada, with the exception of Quebec (Chart 1).

**Chart 1**  
High satisfaction with time use, by Canada's regions, 2022



\* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ( $p < 0.05$ )

**Notes:** Excludes Territories, First Nations reserves, and institutionalized population.

Satisfaction with time use is measured on a scale of 0 to 10. High satisfaction reflects a value of 7 to 10.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Time Use Survey, 2022.

Persons living in Quebec were the most likely to report high satisfaction with time use (67.3%), compared to all other regions. This is aligned with previous research on different measures of well-being, which have found that Quebec has higher levels of [reported life satisfaction](#) and overall [perceived well-being](#)<sup>1</sup> compared to the Canadian average (Statistics Canada, 2024; Statistics Canada, 2023).

## People living in rural areas are more likely than those living in urban areas to report high satisfaction with time use

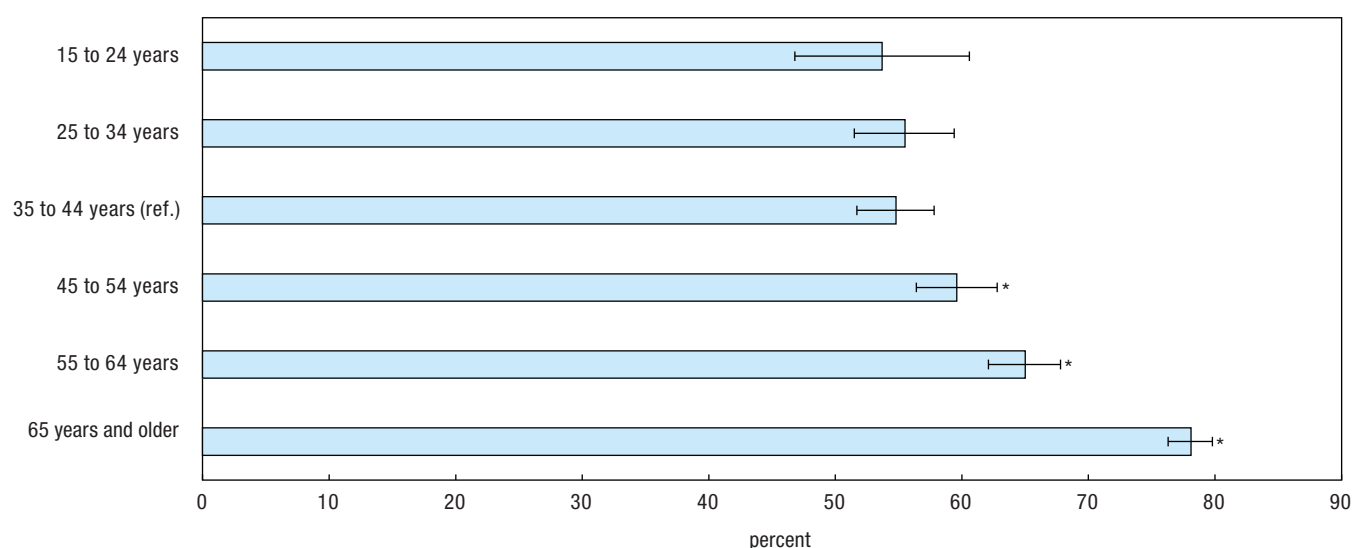
High satisfaction with time use also varied depending on whether someone was living in a rural or an urban area. The rate of persons living in rural areas (69.6%) reporting that they were highly satisfied with their use of time was statistically significantly higher than that of those living in urban areas (61.1%). This result is aligned with the differences in life satisfaction and in the overall perceived well-being between rural and urban populations. Previous research has found that persons living in rural areas were significantly more likely to report being very satisfied with their life as a whole and having higher levels of perceived well-being (Statistics Canada, Table [13-10-0844-01](#); Thomson et al., 2025; Statistics Canada, 2023).

## Older persons report the highest rate of high satisfaction with time use compared to younger age groups

In Canada, high satisfaction with time use tended to increase with age starting in middle-age groups—and this trend held true across all regions of Canada. Nearly 4 in 5 (78.1%) older persons (aged 65 years and older) reported high satisfaction with time use, making this age group the most satisfied (Chart 2).<sup>2</sup>

For each age group, there were no statistically significant gender differences in the likelihood of reporting high satisfaction with time use—despite the fact that women are generally more likely than men to feel pressed for time, to report being constantly under stress, and to report often feeling like they had not accomplished what they had set out to do by the end of the day (Statistics Canada, 2025; Statistics Canada, Table [45-10-0111-04](#)).

**Chart 2**  
High satisfaction with time use in Canada, by age group, 2022



\* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ( $p < 0.05$ )

**Notes:** Excludes Territories, First Nations reserves, and institutionalized population.

Satisfaction with time use is measured on a scale of 0 to 10. High satisfaction reflects a value of 7 to 10.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Time Use Survey, 2022.

1. In this study, overall perceived well-being is created using nine indicators from the Quality of Life framework, with data from multiple waves of the Canadian Social Survey from 2021 to 2022.  
2. There were no statistically significant differences in high satisfaction with time use between adults aged 65 to 74 years and those aged 75 years and older.

The fact that older persons (aged 65 years and older) reported the highest rate of satisfaction with their use of time is aligned with previous research showing that older persons tend to report higher levels of well-being across various measures. They have a higher rate of overall [perceived well-being](#) (Statistics Canada, 2023) and [life satisfaction](#) (Statistics Canada, 2024). They are also the least likely to feel pressed for time: in 2022, only 5.1% of older persons reported [high time pressure](#) compared to 34.8% of core working-age adults aged 25 to 54 years. Compared to those working-age adults, older persons were also less likely to consider themselves a workaholic (12.9% versus 34.5%); less likely to report cutting back on sleep (20.2% versus 59.9%); and less likely to feel they were not spending enough time with family and friends (21.5% versus 58.7%) (Statistics Canada, Table [45-10-0111-01](#)).

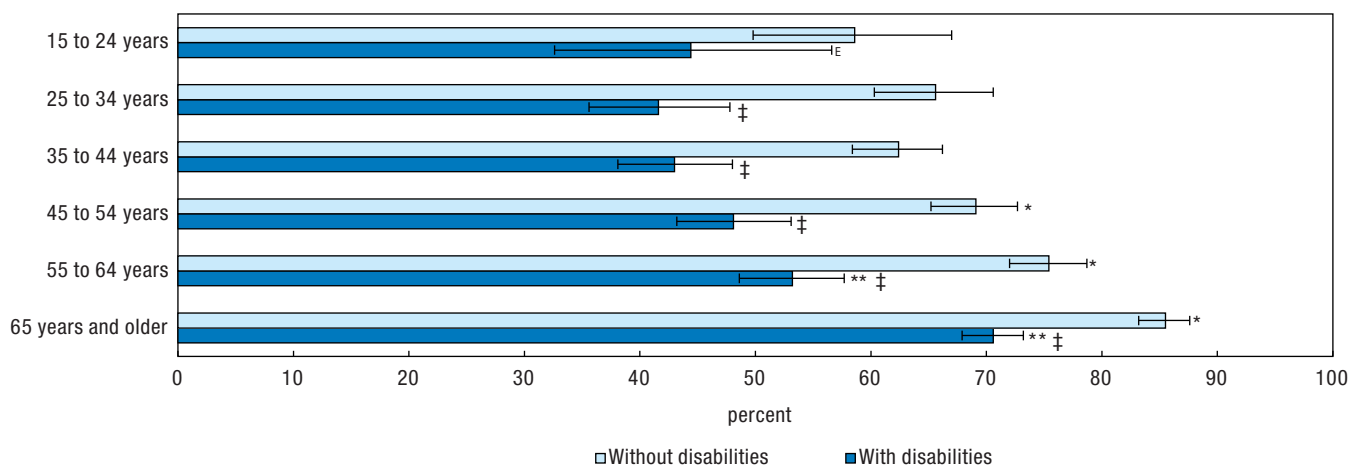
Given that persons aged 65 years and older are more likely to be retired than their younger counterparts, their increased likelihood of reporting high satisfaction with time use may be partially explained by differences in lifestyle. However, the data released today shows that an increase in satisfaction with time use is already seen in the younger age groups of 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 years, who are more likely to still be employed. Indeed, these differences by age groups remain even when we account for the main activity of the past week (analysis not shown here).<sup>3</sup> Future research could use the Time Use Survey to explore the impact of daily activities reported in the time diary on satisfaction with time use.

## Persons with disabilities are less likely to report high satisfaction with their use of time

Persons with disabilities<sup>4</sup> (52.5%) were significantly less likely than persons without disabilities (69.8%) to report high satisfaction with their use of time (Chart 4).<sup>5</sup>

Like the pattern seen at the population level, high satisfaction with time use tended to increase with age among persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities aged 65 years and older (70.6%) were significantly more likely than their younger counterparts aged 35 to 44 years to report high satisfaction with time use (43.0%) (Chart 3).

**Chart 3**  
High satisfaction with time use in Canada, by age group and disability status, 2022

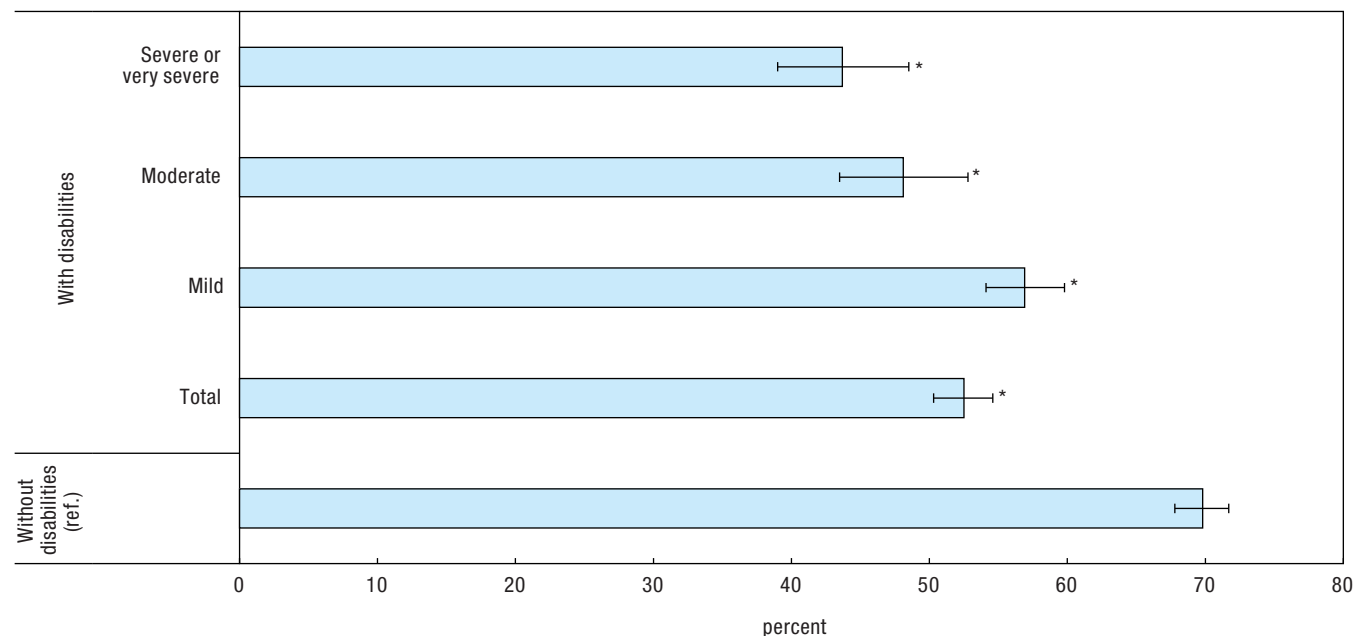


<sup>†</sup> use with caution  
<sup>\*</sup> Statistically significantly different (p<0.05) from reference category (35 to 44 years), for persons without disabilities.  
<sup>\*\*</sup> Statistically significantly different (p<0.05) from reference category (35 to 44 years), for persons with disabilities.  
<sup>‡</sup> Statistically significantly different (p<0.05) from reference category (persons without disabilities).  
**Notes:** Excludes Territories, First Nations reserves, and institutionalized population.  
 Satisfaction with time use is measured on a scale of 0 to 10. High satisfaction reflects a value of 7 to 10.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Time Use Survey, 2022.

3. Valid responses for main activity of the past week include paid work at a job or business; household work or caring for children; retirement; or other.  
 4. Persons with disabilities were identified using the short version of the Disability Screening Questions (DSQ), which was included in the 2022 Time Use Survey.  
 5. Men and women with disabilities were as likely to report high satisfaction with their use of time. The same thing was found for men and women without disabilities: there was no statistically significant gender difference.

Satisfaction with time use was also associated with the severity of disability. Among persons with disabilities, the likelihood of reporting high satisfaction significantly declined as severity of disability increased, with high satisfaction ranging from 56.9% for those with mild disabilities to 43.7% for those with severe or very severe disabilities (Chart 4).

**Chart 4**  
High satisfaction with time use by disability status and severity, 2022



\* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ( $p < 0.05$ )

**Notes:** Excludes Territories, First Nations reserves, and institutionalized population.

Satisfaction with time use is measured on a scale of 0 to 10. High satisfaction reflects a value of 7 to 10.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Time Use Survey, 2022.

While the sociodemographic and socioeconomic profiles of persons with and without disabilities differ (Hébert et al., 2024) — which could impact the likelihood of reporting high satisfaction — additional analysis (not shown here) found that even when accounting for various factors,<sup>6</sup> the difference in satisfaction with time use between people with and without disabilities remained. This suggests that differences in age, employment status and gender cannot explain why people with disabilities are less likely to be highly satisfied with their time use.

These findings align with previous research on time use and well-being for persons with disabilities. In 2015, persons with disabilities were more likely than persons without disabilities to experience high levels of stress and to have negative perceptions of time (Kevins et al., 2022). Persons with disabilities also reported different daily activities than those without disabilities—for example, they were less likely to spend time on paid work and transportation, and more likely to spend time on unpaid work (Kevins et al., 2022).

## Summary

This brief overview of satisfaction with time use looked at the proportions of people reporting high satisfaction across Canada by age and disability status. Results show that reporting high satisfaction with time use differs depending on these characteristics. People living in Quebec were more likely than those living in the other regions of Canada to report high satisfaction with their use of time. Older persons aged 65 years and older were also more likely than their younger counterparts to report high satisfaction with time use. Finally, persons with disabilities were significantly less likely to report high satisfaction with their use of time than persons without disabilities.

6. These analyses used regression models that examined the relationship between disability status and the likelihood of reporting high satisfaction with time use, and controlled for sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, racialized group, Indigenous identity, employment in the past week, educational attainment, and presence of children aged 0 to 14 in the household.

To understand why these differences exist, future research could focus on results from the time diary, which was a key feature of the 2022 Time Use Survey. This could allow for an exploration of whether time spent on particular daily activities—or the subjective rating of how pleasant or unpleasant the respondent found these activities—affected Canadians’ overall satisfaction with time use. Furthermore, future studies could explore both time use in an average day and overall satisfaction with time use results for different groups of people in Canada, enhancing the understanding of the effect that the activities of daily life have on overall quality of life within this diverse country.

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