



# ACTIVE LIVING

## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 1: Background, Survey Details and Socio-Demographic Profile of the Working Population

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health-related behaviour of the Canadian working population. It is hoped that the information will be of assistance to managers, occupational health staff, and other interested parties in Canadian workplaces in their efforts to design workplace programs to improve health and active living.

The series includes the following seven info briefs:

1. *Background, Survey Details and Socio-Demographic Profile of the Working Population*
2. *Physical and Mental Health of the Working Population*
3. *Physical Activities and Sedentary Behaviour of the Working Population*
4. *Healthy Eating Practices in the Working Population*
5. *Occupational Differences in Health and Active Living*
6. *Comparison of Self-Employed Persons and Employees*
7. *Comparison of Full-Time and Part-Time Workers*

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:

- ▶ Technical details of the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey*
- ▶ Socio-demographic profile of the working population



## Technical details of the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey*

The *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS) is a cross-sectional survey conducted every two years by Statistics Canada that collects information on health status, health-care utilization and health determinants for the Canadian population.

The 2003 CCHS (Cycle 2.1) collected responses from persons aged 12 or older living in private occupied dwellings. The CCHS covers approximately 98% of the Canadian population. Excluded from the sampling frame are individuals living on Indian Reserves and on Crown Lands, institutional residents, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of certain remote regions.

Information for Cycle 2.1 was collected between January 2003 and December 2003 covering all provinces and territories. A response was obtained for 144,836 selected households and for 134,072 individuals, the latter resulting in a person-level response rate of 92.6%.

These info briefs are based on analysis of the Public Use Microdata File (PUMF) from the 2003 CCHS. The survey weights provided in the PUMF were used to weight the estimates produced from analysis of the sample to be representative of the covered population.

The working population was defined as all persons between 20 and 65 years of age who had worked at a job within the past year. Of the 18.6 million persons aged 20-64 covered by the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 84% had worked at a job in the last year, while 16% had not. The total sample for the info brief analysis thus consisted of 69,960 individuals representing a population of 16,197,000 Canadians.

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## Socio-demographic profile of the working population

**Gender:** Of the working population, 53% were males, 47% were females.

**Age:** Thirty-five percent were 20-34 years of age, 42% were between 35 and 50, and 23% were 50-64.

**Marital Status:** Just over two-thirds were married or living common-law, 24% single and 9% were divorced, widowed or separated.

**Children Under 12:** Thirty percent of the respondents had children under 12 in the household.

**Country of Birth:** Almost four out of five were born in Canada, one of five outside Canada.

**Cultural/Racial Origin:** Eighty-four percent were white, 16% were members of a visible minority.

**Language:** Some 66% spoke English primarily, 11% French, 22 % were bilingual in English and French, and 1% spoke another language.

**Student Status:** Ten percent were students as well as having worked during the year, 90% were not. Of the students, just over two-thirds were full-time students, one-third part-time.

**Full- or Part-Time Work:** Over 68% worked full-time, 32% part-time.

**Self-Employment:** Eighty-three percent were employees, 17% were self-employed.

**Education:** Eleven percent had not completed secondary school, 20% were secondary grads, 8% had some post-secondary, and 61% were post-secondary grads.

**Occupation:** About 52% were in managerial or professional occupations, 23% in sales or service, and 25% in trades, transport, primary and manufacturing occupations. Females outnumbered males 56% to 44% in the professional occupations, 61% to 39% in sales and service, but were outnumbered 85% to 15% in the blue collar group.

**Income:** Total household income amounted to less than \$30,000 for 12% of workers, from \$30,000 to \$49,999 for 20%, from \$50,000 to \$79,999 for 30% and \$80,000 and over for 38%.

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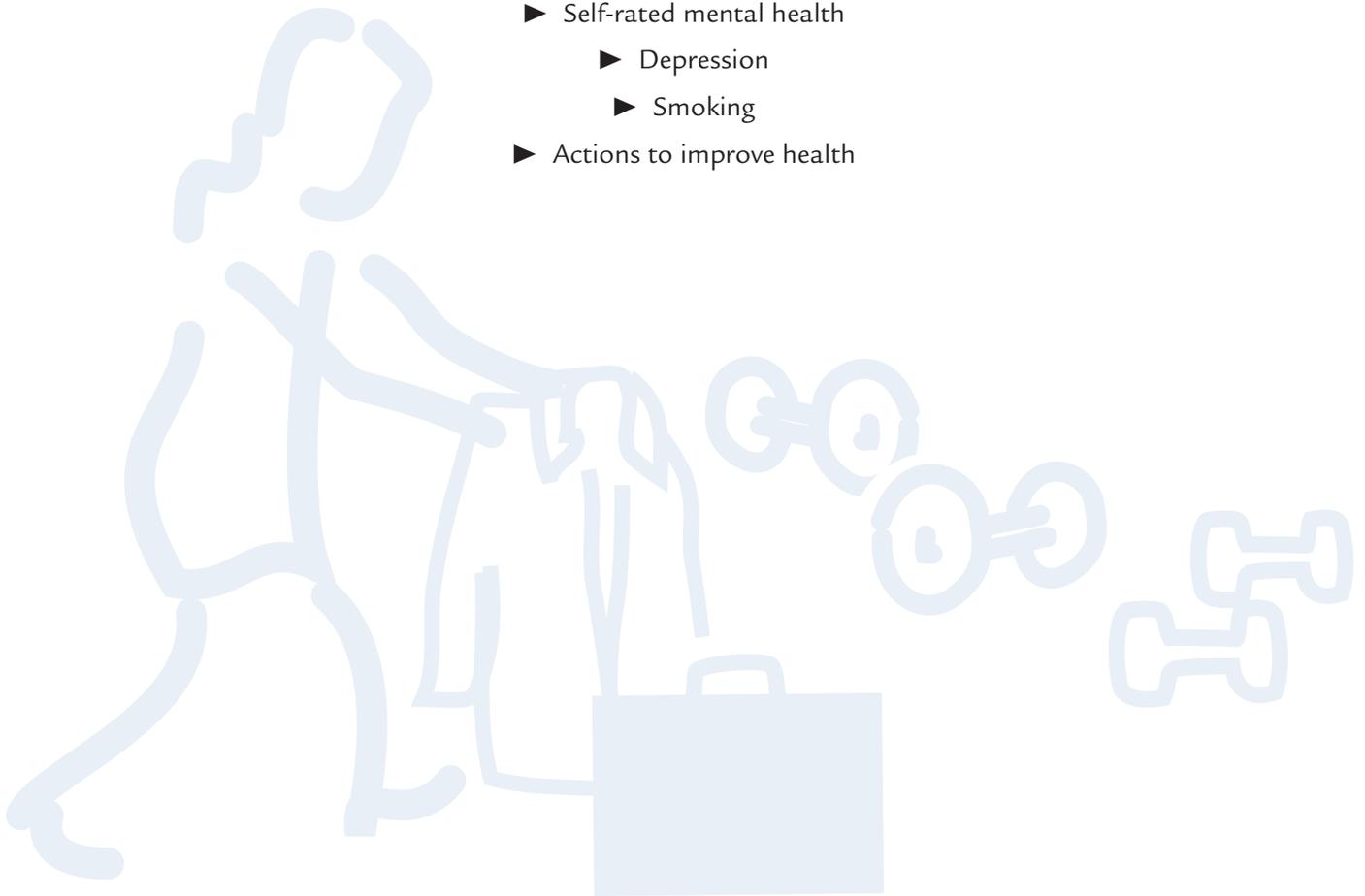
## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 2: Physical and Mental Health of the Working Population

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health-related behaviour of the Canadian working population. This info brief describes the physical and mental health of the working population.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:

- ▶ Self-rated health
- ▶ Chronic health conditions
- ▶ Long-term activity limitations
- ▶ Short-term disability days
  - ▶ Stress
- ▶ Self-rated mental health
  - ▶ Depression
  - ▶ Smoking
- ▶ Actions to improve health



## Self-rated health

The working population rates their health quite highly. About one-quarter rates it as excellent, 39% as very good, and 29% as good. Only 6% rates their health as fair and 1% as poor. Women and men are almost identical in how they rate their health. There is a modest gradient by age, with 69% of those aged 20-34 rating their health as either excellent or very good, compared with 64% of those aged 35-49 and 57% of those aged 50-64.

TABLE 1: SELF-RATED HEALTH BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>Excellent</b>	25%	25%	25%
<b>Very Good</b>	39%	39%	39%
<b>Good</b>	30%	28%	29%
<b>Fair</b>	5%	6%	6%
<b>Poor</b>	1%	1%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 2: SELF-RATED HEALTH BY AGE

	20-34	35-49	50-64
<b>Excellent</b>	28%	25%	21%
<b>Very Good</b>	41%	39%	36%
<b>Good</b>	26%	30%	33%
<b>Fair</b>	4%	5%	9%
<b>Poor</b>	1%	1%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

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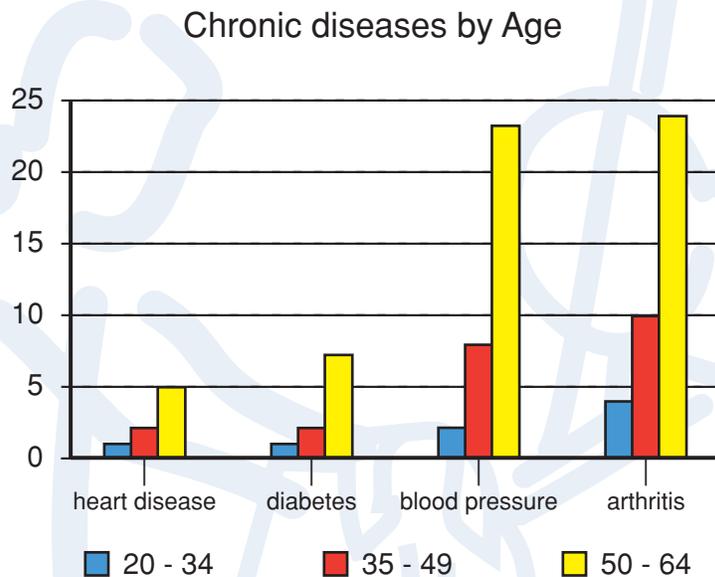


## Chronic health conditions

Almost two-thirds state they have a chronic health condition of some kind, however, many are fairly minor. Among the more serious include:

- ▶ *Heart Disease:* About 2% say they have heart disease. More men than women have heart disease.
- ▶ *Cancer:* Fewer than 1% say they are living with cancer. Women are more likely than men to be living with cancer.
- ▶ *Diabetes:* About 3% say they have doctor-diagnosed diabetes, with men slightly more likely than women to say they have this condition.
- ▶ *High Blood Pressure:* About 9% have high blood pressure, with rates similar for men and women.
- ▶ *Arthritis:* About 11% overall say they have arthritis or rheumatism. This ranges from 14% among women to 9% among men.

The following chart shows that older workers are much more likely to have a chronic health condition than the young. The rate is more than double in the 50-64 than in the 35-49 age group.



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## Long-term activity limitations

Respondents were asked if a long-term condition limited the amount of activity they could do at work. Twelve percent had a condition which limited activity at work either sometimes or often. There was little difference between men and women. Activity limitations increased from 10% of those aged 20-34 to 16% of those aged 50-64.

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## Short-term disability days

- ▶ Almost 84% had no disability days due to illness and injury in the last two weeks.
- ▶ About 87% of men versus 80% of women had no disability days.
- ▶ The likelihood of having disability days actually declined with age from 18% of those aged 20-34 to 17% of those aged 35-49 to 14% of those aged 50-64.

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## Work stress

Respondents were asked about their work stress level. Overall, about one-quarter said they were not at all or not very stressed, and another 43% said they were a bit stressed. Thus over two-thirds did not perceive much stress on the job. However, 26% said they were quite a bit stressed and 7% that they were extremely stressed.

As the following table shows, men and women were very similar in their work stress levels. Women were slightly more likely than men to report quite a bit or extreme stress (34% vs 31%). There was very little difference in work stress by age.

TABLE 3: SELF-RATED WORK STRESS LEVEL BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>Not At All</b>	8%	7%	8%
<b>Not Very</b>	17%	17%	17%
<b>A Bit</b>	44%	42%	43%
<b>Quite A Bit</b>	25%	27%	26%
<b>Extremely</b>	6%	7%	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

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## Self-rated mental health

Respondents were asked to rate their mental health. Overall, 40% rated their mental health as excellent, 36% as very good, 20% as good, 3% as fair and 1% as poor. Men and women were almost identical in their ratings and there was not much difference by age.

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## Depression

Similarly, a small proportion of the working population suffers from clinically-defined depression. Overall 6% were clinically depressed, based on their questionnaire answers. In contrast to self-rated mental health, women were more likely than men to be clinically depressed (8% vs 5%). Clinical depression was more common in the younger age groups: 8% in the 20-34 age group, 6% in the 35-49 group and 5% in the 50-64 group.

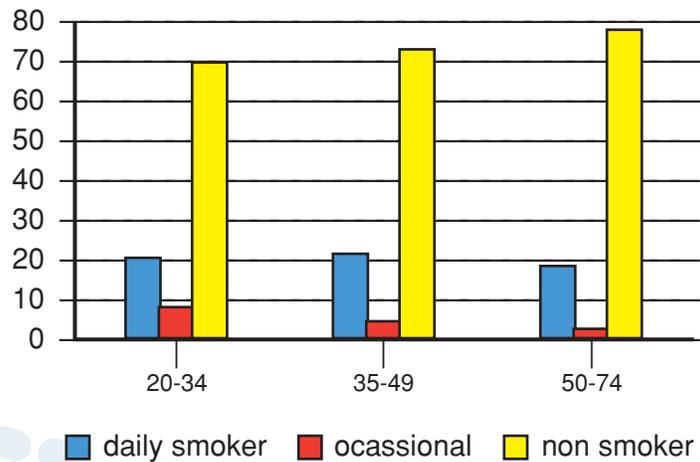
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## Smoking

Smoking is still common in the working population. Twenty-one percent are daily smokers, 6% occasional smokers, and 73% are non-smokers. Men are more likely than women to be smokers: 29% vs 25%. Surprisingly, younger workers are more likely to smoke than older workers, as the following chart shows.

### Smoking by Age



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## Actions to improve health

Sixty-one percent said they had done something to *improve their health* in the past year, 39% that they had not. In addition:

- ▶ 53% increased exercise
- ▶ 15% lost weight
- ▶ 12% changed diet or eating habits
- ▶ 11% quite smoking or reduced the amount smoked
- ▶ 1% drank less alcohol

Women were more likely than men to make changes to improve health (67% vs 56%). Younger workers were most likely to make changes, older workers least likely.

Almost three-quarters of the working population said *there was something they should do* to improve their health in the next year

- ▶ 46% cited increasing exercise
- ▶ 19% said quit smoking
- ▶ 16% said improve eating habits
- ▶ 14% said lose weight

Men and women were almost equally likely to perceive the need to do something to improve their health (73% vs 74%).

Almost half perceived *a barrier to making the change*:

- ▶ 44% cited lack of time
- ▶ 39% cited lack of will power
- ▶ 7% said they were too stressed
- ▶ 6% cited a disability or health problem
- ▶ 5% said it was too costly
- ▶ 4% said it was too difficult
- ▶ 4% said they were too tired

There were some differences by age and gender:

- ▶ Older workers were more likely to cite lack of will power
- ▶ Younger workers were most likely to cite lack of time
- ▶ Older workers were more likely to mention being too tired or change being too difficult
- ▶ Women were slightly more likely to cite barriers than men, but the differences were not large

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# ACTIVE LIVING

## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 3: Physical Activities and Sedentary Behaviour of the Working Population

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health behaviour of the Canadian working population.

This info brief describes participation in different types of physical activities and the amount of time spent on sedentary pursuits by the working population.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:

- ▶ Frequency of participating in leisure-time physical activities
  - ▶ Most popular activities
  - ▶ Physical activity energy expenditure
- ▶ Physical activity in the work/school/household setting
  - ▶ Active commuting
  - ▶ Sedentary activities



## Frequency of participating in leisure-time physical activities

Almost 66% of the working population were regular participants in leisure-time physical activity (participated for at least 15 minutes, more than 3 times a week). Another 18% were occasional participants (at least once a week), while 17% were infrequent (less than once a week).

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## Most popular activities

The most popular activities were walking (69% participated in the last 3 months), gardening (50%) and home exercise (34%). Swimming (24%), biking (24%) social dance (21%), weight training (20%) and running/jogging (19%) came next. Other activities included:

▶ walking	69%	▶ running	19%	▶ skating	9%
▶ gardening	50%	▶ weight training	20%	▶ inline skating	7%
▶ home exercise	34%	▶ golfing	14%	▶ hockey	7%
▶ swimming	24%	▶ bowling	11%	▶ skiing	6%
▶ bicycling	24%	▶ aerobics	11%		
▶ social dance	21%	▶ fishing	11%		

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## Physical activity energy expenditure

The physical activity index measures the amount of energy expenditure in leisure-time physical activity. It is used to measure the health effects of physical activity. The highest category – ‘active’ – represents energy expenditure of three or more kilocalories per kilogram of body weight per day – a level resulting in significant health benefits.

TABLE 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDEX BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>Active</b>	27%	22%	25%
<b>Moderate</b>	25%	27%	26%
<b>Inactive</b>	48%	51%	49%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

By this measure, only 25% of the working population is active. Another 26% are moderately active and 49% are inactive. Men are more likely to be in the active category than women, with women more likely to be moderately active and inactive.

TABLE 2: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDEX BY AGE

	20-34	35-54	55-64
<b>Active</b>	30%	24%	21%
<b>Moderate</b>	26%	26%	26%
<b>Inactive</b>	44%	50%	53%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

Younger workers are more active than older workers. Thirty percent of those aged 15-34 are in the active category compared with 24% of those 35-54 and only 21% in the oldest (55-64) category.

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## Physical activity in the work/school/household setting

In addition to leisure-time activity, workers were asked about their usual level of activity at work, school or in their daily routine.

TABLE 3: DAILY ACTIVITY LEVEL AT WORK BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
Mainly Sitting	24%	27%	26%
Stand/Walk	36%	46%	41%
Light Lifting	24%	23%	24%
Heavy Lifting	15%	5%	10%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Overall, most of the working population face light physical demands at work. Over one-quarter mainly sit during the day. Another 41% stand and walk most of the time. Slightly less than one-quarter engage in light lifting and only one in ten do heavy lifting or carry heavy loads. Men are more likely than women to do heavy physical work, but even so, the large majority are relatively inactive.

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## Active commuting

Walking or bicycling to work or school are another way of gaining physical activity. The CCHS asked how many hours in a typical week the respondent spent walking and biking to work.

TABLE 4: WEEKLY HOURS WALKING TO WORK BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>None</b>	36%	29%	33%
<b>1-5 Hours</b>	41%	48%	44%
<b>6+ Hours</b>	23%	23%	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

A substantial proportion of the working population – over two-thirds – spent over an hour a week walking to work. Women were more likely than men to spend some time walking to work. A substantial fraction of both men and women – about 23% – spent five or more hours in a typical week walking to work.

Many fewer biked to work. Only about 6% said they spent at least some time biking to work in a typical week. Men are more likely than women to say they bike to work.

TABLE 5: WEEKLY HOURS BIKING TO WORK BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>None</b>	92%	95%	94%
<b>1-5 Hours</b>	7%	4%	5%
<b>6+ Hours</b>	2%	1%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

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## Sedentary activities

The survey asked about the amount of time spent in sedentary activities in leisure-time (not at work or school). The activities asked of the 20+ population include using a computer, watching TV, and reading.

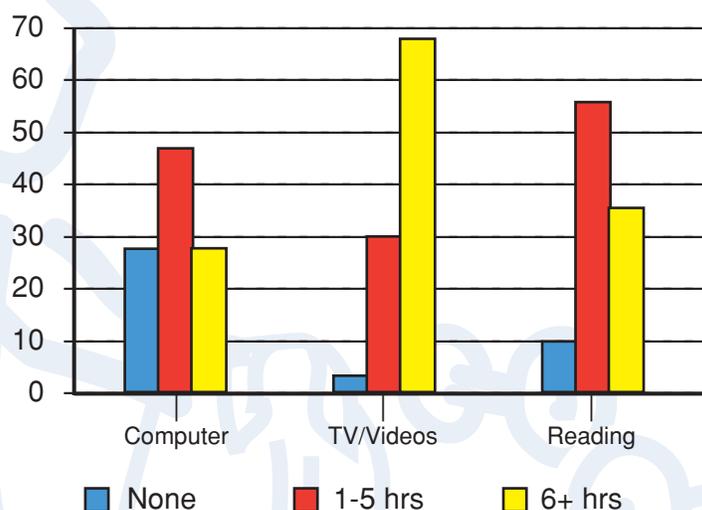
The most time-consuming sedentary leisure-time activity for the 20+ population was watching TV or videos, with more than two-thirds of the population spending six or more hours a week on this. Another 29% spent 1-5 hours a week watching TV, with only 3% saying they spent no time on this.

Reading was next most popular, with 36% spending six or more hours a week on it and 55% spending from 1-5 hours. About a quarter of the working population spent six or more hours a week of their leisure time using a computer, and another 47% spent 1-5 hours.

Males were more likely than females to be heavy TV viewers (72% vs 64%). Males were also more likely to spend six or more hours at the computer (30% vs 21%). However females were 10% more likely to spend 6+ hours a week reading (31% vs 21%).

By age, the 20-34 age group were most likely to be heavy computer users, the older 50-64 age group most likely to be heavy TV viewers and readers, and the 35-49 group were in the middle.

Time on Sedentary Activities



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## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 4: Healthy Eating Practices in the Working Population

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health behaviour of the Canadian working population.

This info brief describes the healthy eating practices in the working population.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:

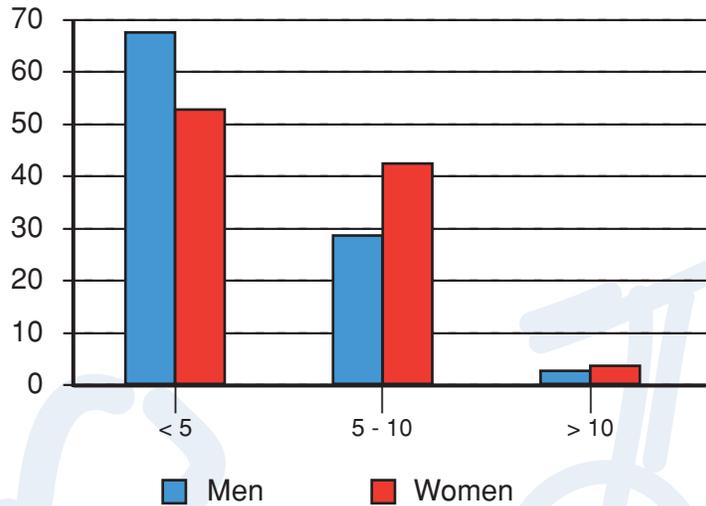
- ▶ Daily fresh fruit and vegetable consumption
- ▶ Patterns of choosing or avoiding certain foods
  - ▶ Food insecurity
  - ▶ Weight concerns



## Daily vegetable and fruit consumption

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends five servings of vegetables and fruit a day. As the following chart shows, women are more likely than men to meet the guidelines. Whereas 47% of women obtain the recommended five servings or more, only 32% of men meet the recommendations.

Servings of Veg/Fruit Per Day



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## Patterns of avoiding or choosing foods

More than three-quarters avoided or chose certain foods overall. In addition:

- ▶ 48% avoided foods out of weight concerns
- ▶ 38% avoided foods to prevent heart disease
- ▶ 27% avoided foods to prevent cancer
- ▶ 25% avoided foods to prevent osteoporosis
- ▶ 63% chose foods to get lower fat content
- ▶ 51% chose foods to increase fibre content
- ▶ 42% chose foods to increase calcium content
- ▶ 53% chose foods to minimize certain types of fat
- ▶ 40% chose foods to lower salt content
- ▶ 44% chose foods to minimize cholesterol

Women were more likely to choose or avoid certain foods than men. For instance 57% of women vs 40% of men avoided foods for weight reasons, 72% of women vs 55% of men chose foods for lower fat content, 56% of women vs 30% of men chose foods for calcium content, 45% vs 36% watched the salt content of foods. Even for diseases like heart disease that are more prevalent among men than women, women were more likely than men to make healthy food choices. For instance, 47% of women vs 41% of men chose foods for cholesterol content.

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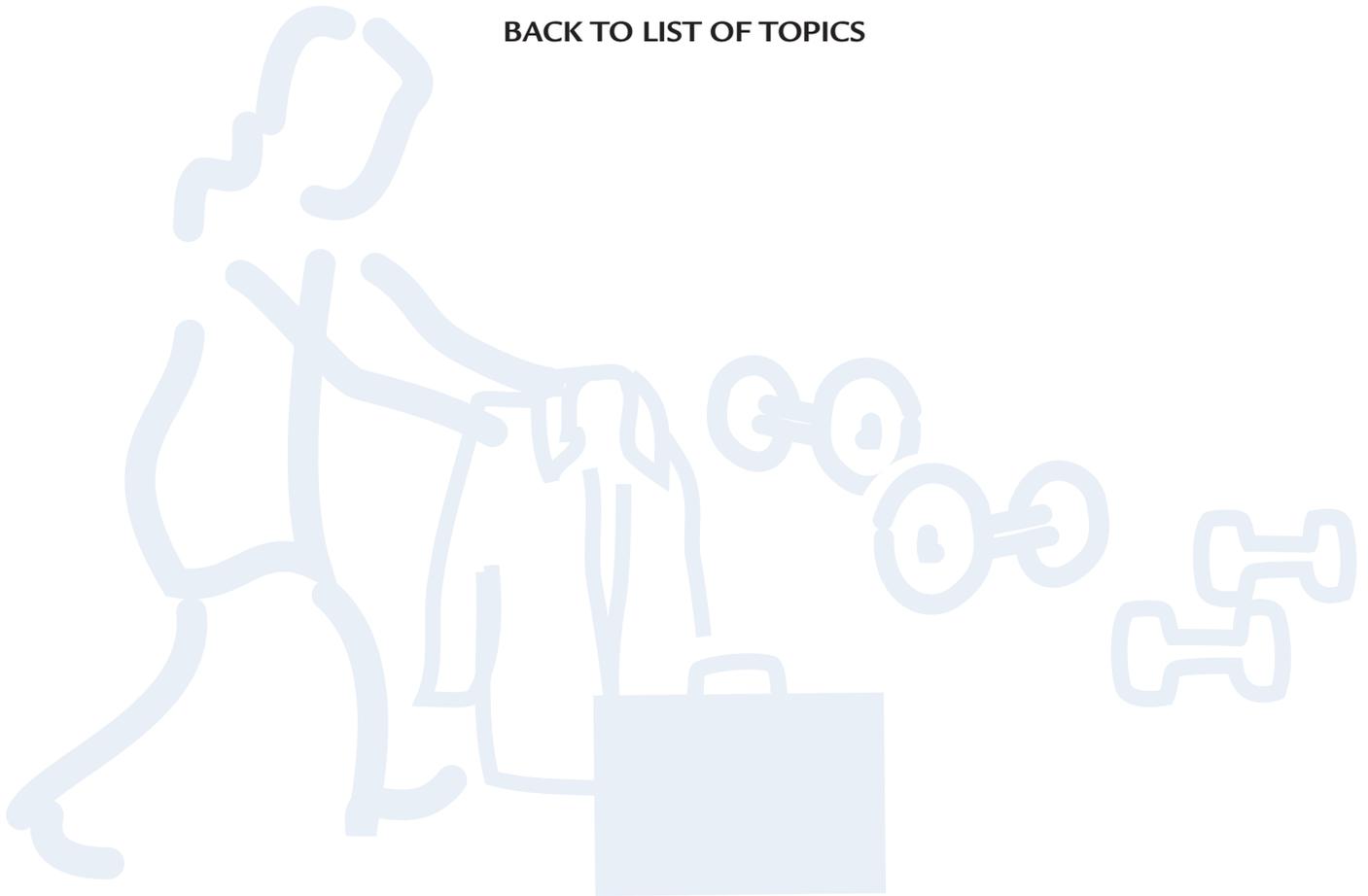
## Food insecurity

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about food insecurity. Food insecurity involves concern about not having enough food to eat because of a lack of money, or not having an appropriate quality or variety of foods.

Other highlights include:

- ▶ Overall, 2% were often worried there would not be enough to eat, and another 7% sometimes worried about this. Nine out of ten were not worried.
- ▶ One percent said that they “often” did not have enough to eat, and 5% said they “sometimes” did not have enough.
- ▶ Three percent said they “often” were unable to eat the desired quality of food and 9% were “sometimes” unable to eat the desired quality.
- ▶ Women were more likely than men to have food insecurity
- ▶ Low income families were considerably more likely to have food insecurity than middle-or high-income families.
- ▶ 11% of women vs 3% of men were often or sometimes worried they would not have enough to eat.

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## Weight concerns

Respondents were asked whether they considered themselves to be underweight, just right or overweight. Overall, 41% considered themselves to be overweight, 4 percent underweight and 55% just right. This compares with 50% who were actually overweight or obese, 48% who were of normal weight and 2% who were underweight according to public health standards.

TABLE 1: OPINION OF OWN WEIGHT BY GENDER

	Men	Women	Total
<b>Overweight</b>	37%	45%	41%
<b>Underweight</b>	5%	3%	4%
<b>Just Right</b>	57%	52%	55%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%

Women were more likely to consider themselves overweight than men (45% vs 37%). In fact, men were considerably more likely than women to actually be overweight or obese (59% vs 39%).

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# ACTIVE LIVING

## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 5: Occupational Differences in Health and Active Living

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health-related behaviour of the Canadian working population.

This info brief describes occupational differences in health and active living. Three occupational groups were compared in the analysis:

- ▶ Professional and managerial workers
- ▶ Sales and service workers
- ▶ Trades, transportation, primary and manufacturing workers

#### THE TOPICS ON WHICH THESE THREE GROUPS ARE COMPARED INCLUDE:

- ▶ *Background*: including overview of socio-demographic differences between the three occupational groups;
- ▶ *Health Status*: including self-rated health, chronic conditions, work stress, smoking, and overweight and obesity;
- ▶ *Physical Activity*: including frequency of leisure-time physical activities, energy expenditure, physical activity at work, active commuting and sedentary activities;
- ▶ *Healthy Eating*: including fruit and vegetable consumption, choosing or avoiding certain foods, food security
- ▶ *Actions to Improve Health*: including changes made in the past year, changes they feel they should make in the next year, and perceived barriers to making changes.



## Background

Info Brief 1 outlined some of the socio-demographic differences between the three occupational groups. To review:

- ▶ About 52% of the working population were in managerial or professional occupations, 23% in sales or service, and 25% in trades, transport, primary and manufacturing occupations.
- ▶ Females outnumbered males 56% to 44% in the professional and managerial occupations, 61% to 39% in sales and service, but were outnumbered 85% to 15% in the blue collar, trades, transport and manufacturing group.
- ▶ Professional/managerial workers had the highest levels of education, followed by sales/service and trades/transportation.

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## **HEALTH STATUS**

### **Self-rated health**

Managerial and professional workers were more likely to rate their health highly. About 69% rated their health either as excellent or very good compared with 62% of sales and service and 59% of trades, transportation and manufacturing.

### **Chronic conditions**

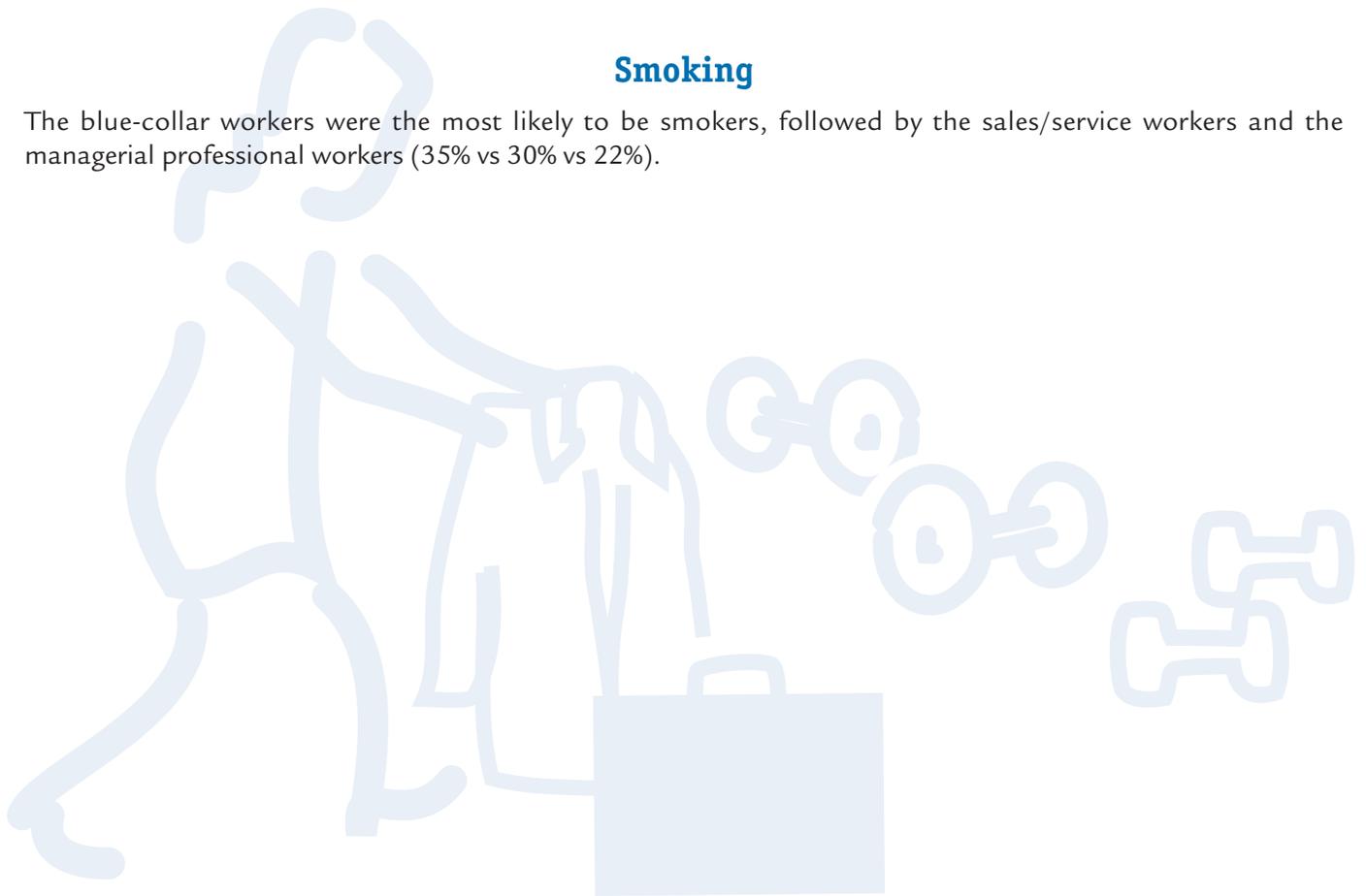
The three occupational groups were almost equally likely to have chronic conditions. Blue collar workers were slightly more likely to have heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure, sales and service to have arthritis, and managerial/professional workers to have cancer, but the differences were small.

### **Work stress**

Managerial and professional workers were most likely to perceive high work stress levels. About 38% rated the amount of work stress as either quite a bit, or extreme, compared with 26% of both sales/service and trades/transport workers.

### **Smoking**

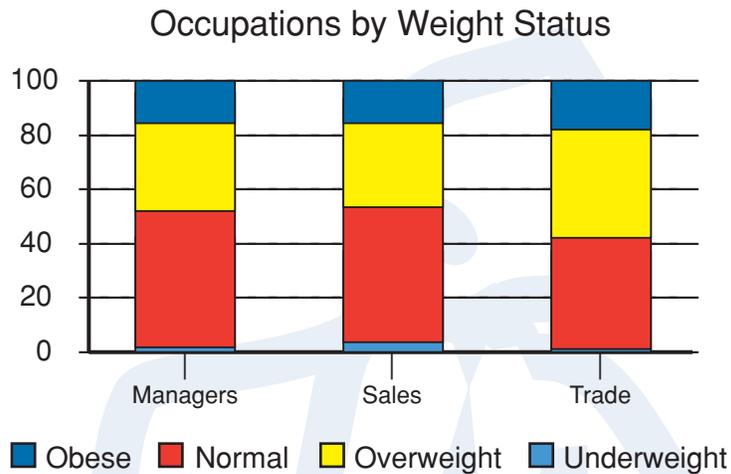
The blue-collar workers were the most likely to be smokers, followed by the sales/service workers and the managerial professional workers (35% vs 30% vs 22%).



## Overweight and obesity

The mainly male trade/transport/manufacturing group had the highest levels of obesity (18%) and overweight (40%). Sales and service was in the middle with 15% obese and 31% overweight. They also had the highest percentage who were underweight (4%). The managerial and professional group had slightly fewer obese members (14%), but more overweight (33%).

Even holding gender constant, the blue-collar workers were heavier. For instance, men in the trades had 18% obese compared to 16% of the men in sales and service and management and the professions. Similarly 15% of the women in the trades were obese and 28% overweight compared with 13% and 25% of the managers and professionals.



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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### Frequency of leisure-time activity

The managerial and professional group were most likely to be regularly active in their leisure time. Seven out of ten were regularly active three times a week or more compared with 66% of the sales and service employees and 57% of the blue-collar group.

### Physical activity energy expenditure

The sales and service workers slightly outdid the managers and professionals in attaining the recommended level of physical activity energy expenditure and the trades, transport and manufacturing group was lowest. A higher proportion of the managers and professionals were in the moderate activity category.

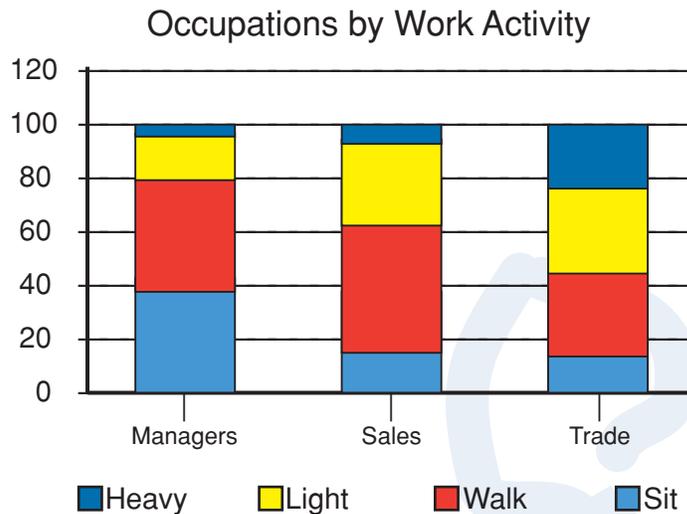
TABLE 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDEX BY OCCUPATION

	Managers/ Professional	Sales/ Service	Trades/ Transport/ Manufacture
Active	26%	27%	22%
Moderate	28%	25%	23%
Inactive	46%	49%	55%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%



## Physical activity in the work/school/household setting

The reverse situation holds when we consider the amount of activity at work as the following chart shows. Blue collar workers are much more likely to perform heavy work (25%) than either of the other groups. At the other extreme, managers and professionals are much more likely to sit during the day than either of the others. Sales and service workers are more likely to stand and walk during the work day.



### Active commuting

Sales and service workers are likely to spend more time walking to work in an average week than managerial and professional and trades, transport and manufacturing workers. The three groups are almost identical in the small proportion who regularly bicycle to work.

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# HEALTH EATING

## Daily vegetable and fruit consumption

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends five servings of vegetables and fruit a day. Managers and professionals are most likely to meet the guideline (42%), sales and service workers second most likely (39%), and trades, transport and manufacturing workers least likely (32%).

## Patterns of avoiding or choosing foods

Managers and professionals were much more likely to say they chose or avoided certain foods for various health reasons than sales and service workers and especially the mainly male trades, transport and manufacturing workers. For instance, 56% of managers/professionals selected foods for weight concerns compared with 47% of sales/service workers and 33% of trades workers.

TABLE 2: PERCENT CHOOSING/AVOIDING CERTAIN FOODS FOR REASON

	Professionals/ Managers	Sales/ Service	Trades/ Transport
<b>Weight Concern</b>	56%	47%	33%
<b>Heart Disease</b>	45%	35%	28%
<b>Cancer</b>	31%	25%	19%
<b>Lower Fat</b>	72%	61%	48%
<b>Fibre</b>	60%	47%	39%
<b>Calcium</b>	48%	32%	30%
<b>Salt</b>	44%	39%	36%
<b>Cholesterol</b>	48%	41%	36%

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# ACTIONS TO IMPROVE HEALTH

## Changes in past year

- ▶ Managers and professionals were most likely to say they did something to improve their health in the past year (65%). Sales and service workers were second (64%), and trades, transport and manufacturing workers were least likely (53%).
- ▶ Managers/professionals were most likely to mention *increasing exercise* as they change they made, sales/service workers in the middle, and blue collar workers least likely.
- ▶ Sales and service workers were most likely to cite *losing weight*
- ▶ Blue-collar trades, transport and manufacturing workers were most likely to cite *stopping smoking* and *reducing alcohol use*.

## Changes they should make next year

- ▶ Managers and professionals were also most likely to say there was *something they should do* to improve their health in the next year (76%). Sales and service workers were second (73%), and trades, transport and manufacturing workers were least likely (70%).
- ▶ Again, managers/professionals were most likely to mention *increasing exercise* as they change they should make, sales/service workers in the middle, and blue collar workers least likely.
- ▶ Sales and service workers were most likely to cite *changing eating habits*, managers/professionals second most likely, and blue-collar workers least.
- ▶ Blue-collar workers were most likely to cite *stopping smoking*, as the change they should make, sales/service workers in the middle and managers/professionals least likely. These figures reflect actual current smoking patterns.

## Perceived barriers to change

After asking about changes they should make next year to improve health, the survey asked whether there was anything stopping them from making the change.

- ▶ Managers and professionals were most likely to say there was something stopping them from making changes (51%), sales and service next (48%), and trades, transport and manufacturing workers least likely (45%).
- ▶ Managers and professionals were most likely to cite *lack of time* as the barrier preventing them from making changes (49%). Forty-three percent of sales/service workers cited lack of time as did 39% of blue-collar workers.
- ▶ Blue-collar workers were most likely to mention *lack of willpower* as the main barrier (42%). They were followed by sales/service workers (39%) and managers/professionals (35%).
- ▶ Blue-collar workers were most likely to cite *stress* and *fatigue* as barriers, sales/service workers *cost*, and managers/professionals a *disability or health problem*.

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# ACTIVE LIVING

## and the Working Population

### **Info Brief 6: Comparison of Self-Employed Persons and Employees**

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 *Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health behaviour of the Canadian working population.

This info brief compares self-employed persons with employees.

#### **SPECIFIC TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:**

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Health status
- ▶ Physical activity
- ▶ Healthy eating
- ▶ Actions to improve health



## Background

- ▶ Overall, about 17% of the working population were self-employed and 83% were employees.
- ▶ Males were more prevalent in the self-employed where they made up 64% versus 36% for females. Females made up 51% of employees while males made up 49%.
- ▶ Self-employed workers tended to be older than employees. Only 19% of the self-employed were in the 20-34 age group compared with 38% of the employees. At the other end of the spectrum, 35% were between 50 and 64 compared with 21% of the employees.

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## **HEALTH STATUS**

### **Self-rated health**

There was very little difference in how the two groups rated their own health. About 66% of self-employed persons rated their health either as excellent or very good compared with 65% of employees. Very similar proportions of self-employed and employed rated their health as good, fair or poor.

### **Chronic conditions**

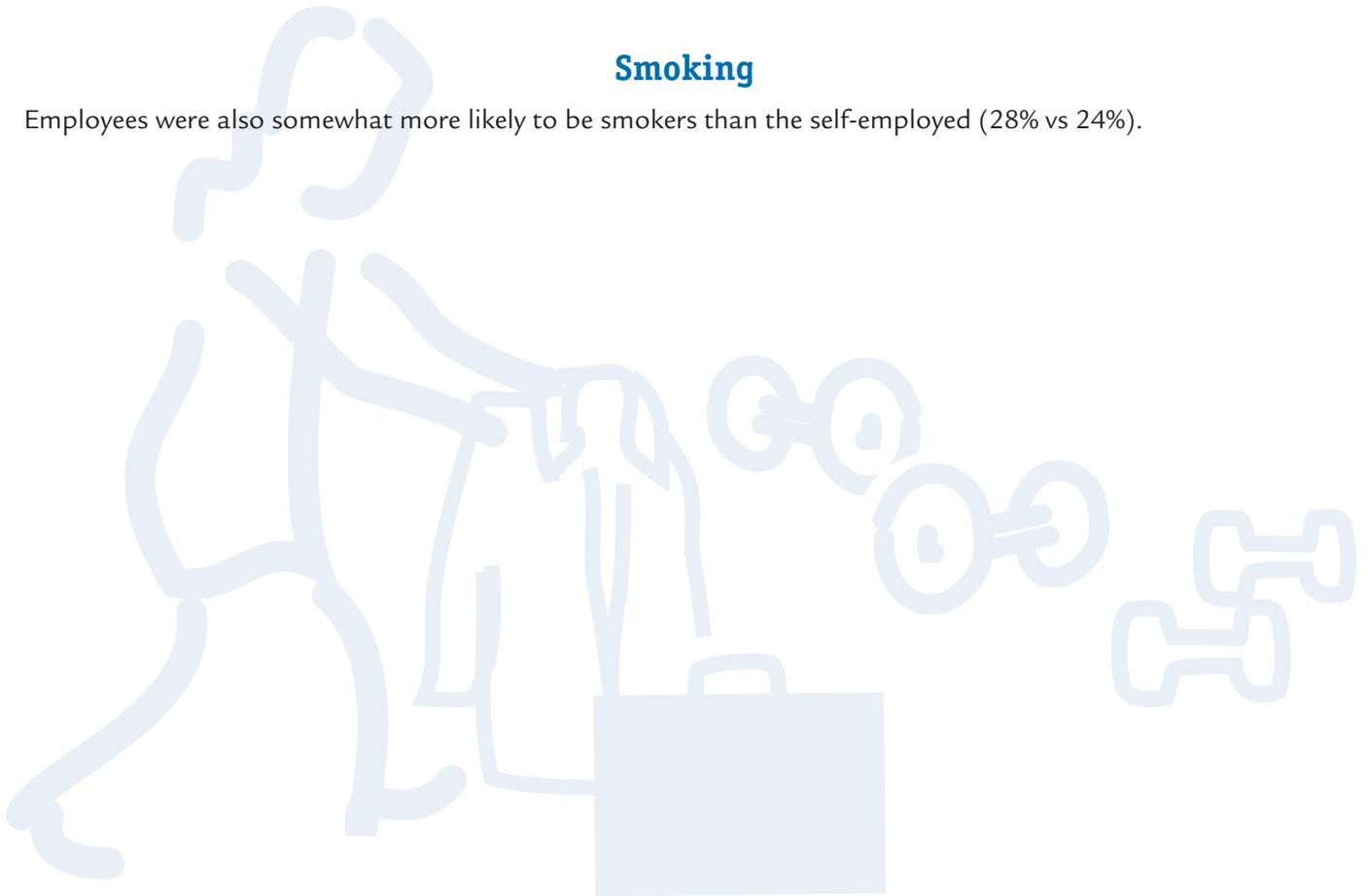
The self-employed were more likely to have chronic conditions than the employed, including arthritis (14% vs 11%), high blood pressure (11% vs 9%) and heart disease (3% vs 2%). This may be due to the higher average age of the self-employed.

### **Work stress**

Employees were slightly more likely to perceive high work stress levels than the self-employed, but the differences were small. About one-third rated the amount of work stress as either quite a bit, or extreme, compared with 30% of the self-employed workers.

### **Smoking**

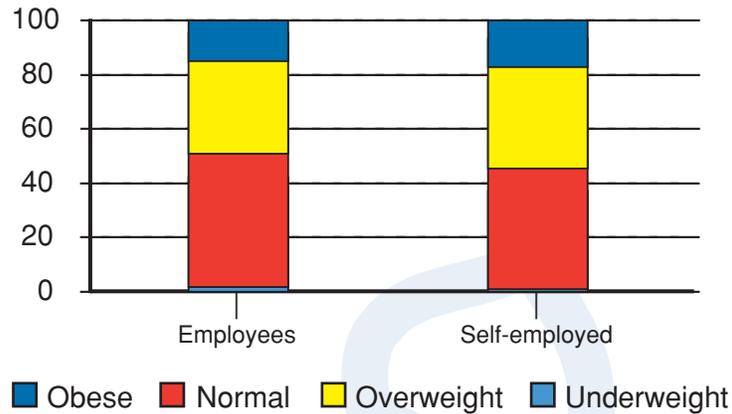
Employees were also somewhat more likely to be smokers than the self-employed (28% vs 24%).



## Overweight and obesity

The self-employed had higher levels of obesity (17%) and overweight (38%). Of the employees, 15% were obese and 34% overweight. They also had the highest percentage of normal weight (49%) and underweight persons (2%).

Working Population by Weight Status



It was mainly among the men that the weight difference between the self-employed and employees was evident. Among males 62% of the self-employed were overweight or obese vs 58% of the employees. Among women, there was little difference in weight between the two groups.

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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### Frequency of leisure-time activity

There was virtually no difference in the proportion of self-employed and employees who were regularly active in their leisure time. Sixty-six percent of the self-employed were regularly active three times a week or more compared with 65% of the employees.

### Physical activity energy expenditure

The two groups were also almost identical in attaining the recommended level of physical activity energy expenditure. Overall, one-quarter were sufficiently active, 26% were moderately active and 49% were inactive.

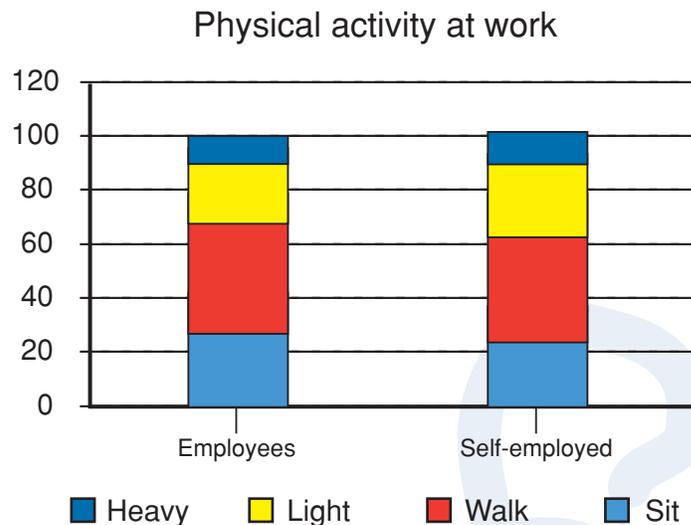
TABLE 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDEX BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	Employees	Self-Employed	Total
<b>Active</b>	25%	26%	25%
<b>Moderate</b>	26%	25%	26%
<b>Inactive</b>	49%	49%	49%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%



## Physical activity in the work/school/household setting

The self-employed have a greater amount of physical activity at work, but the differences are not large. About 12% of the self-employed perform heavy work and 27% perform work involving light lifting, versus 10% and 23% of employees. At the other extreme, 23% of the self-employed mainly sit during the day, versus 26% of employees.



## Active commuting

The self-employed are more likely to spend either zero time (35% vs 32%), or six hours or more a week (25% vs 23%), walking to work in an average week than the employees. Employees are more likely to spend from 1 to 5 hours a week walking to work (45% vs 40%). The two groups are almost identical in the small proportion who regularly bicycle to work (6% vs 7%).

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# HEALTH EATING

## Daily vegetable and fruit consumption

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends five servings of vegetables and fruit a day. Self-employed persons are slightly more likely to meet the guideline (40%) with employees behind (39%).

## Patterns of avoiding or choosing foods

Overall, there was very little difference between employees and the self-employed in their pattern of choosing or avoiding foods for health reasons. The self-employed were slightly more likely to choose foods to prevent heart disease and cancer, and to increase fibre, reduce salt and reduce cholesterol.

TABLE 2: PERCENT CHOOSING/AVOIDING CERTAIN FOODS FOR REASON

	Employees	Self-Employed
<b>Weight Concern</b>	48%	49%
<b>Heart Disease</b>	38%	41%
<b>Cancer</b>	26%	29%
<b>Lower Fat</b>	63%	64%
<b>Fibre</b>	51%	57%
<b>Calcium</b>	42%	42%
<b>Salt</b>	40%	43%
<b>Cholesterol</b>	43%	45%

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# ACTIONS TO IMPROVE HEALTH

## Changes in past year

- ▶ Employees were more likely to say they did something to improve their health in the past year (62%). Fifty-eight percent of self-employed persons said they made a similar change.
- ▶ Employees were most likely to mention *increasing exercise* as the change they made (54%) versus 50% of the self-employed.
- ▶ Self-employed workers were most likely to cite *losing weight* (16% vs 15%) and *changing eating habits* (14% vs 12%).
- ▶ Employees were slightly more likely to cite *stopping smoking* (11% vs 10%).

## Changes they should make next year

- ▶ Employees were most likely to say there was *something they should do* to improve their health in the next year (74% vs 70%).
- ▶ There was very little difference between employees and the self-employed in the specific changes they felt they should make. Forty-six percent of employees vs 45% of self-employed persons cited increasing exercise, 14% vs 13% cited losing weight, 14% vs 16% cited changing eating habits and 18% vs 19% mentioned quitting smoking.

## Perceived barriers to change

- ▶ After asking about changes they should make next year to improve health, the survey asked whether there was anything stopping them from making the change.
- ▶ Slightly under half of both employees and self-employed workers said there was something stopping them from making changes to improve their health.
- ▶ Forty-four percent of both employees and the self-employed cited *lack of time* as the barrier preventing them from making changes.
- ▶ Thirty-eight percent of both groups mention *lack of willpower* as the barrier preventing them from making changes.
- ▶ Employees were slightly more likely than the self-employed to mention being *too tired* or *too stressed* or having a *disability or health problem* as barriers.

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# ACTIVE LIVING

## and the Working Population

### Info Brief 7: Comparison of Full-Time and Part-Time Workers

This is one of a series of information briefs based on the 2003 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). The series aims to provide a profile of the health and health-related behaviour of the Canadian working population.

This sheet compares full-time and part-time workers.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS BRIEF INCLUDE:

- ▶ Highlights
- ▶ Health status
- ▶ Physical activity
- ▶ Healthy eating
- ▶ Actions to improve health



## Highlights

- ▶ Overall, about 14% of the working population were part-timers and 86% were full-time workers.
- ▶ Males were more concentrated among the full-time workers where they made up 58% and females made up 42%. In contrast, females made up 74% of part-timers while males made up 26%.
- ▶ Part-time workers were somewhat more likely to be concentrated at the younger and older ends of the age spectrum, while full-timers tended to be more concentrated in the middle, 35-49 age bracket. Some 34% of the full-timers were in the 20-34 group, 43% in the 35-49 group and 23% in the 50-64 group. For part-timers, 40% were in the 20-34 group, 33% in the 35-49 group and 27% in the 50-64 group.

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## **HEALTH STATUS**

### **Self-rated health**

There was very little difference in how the two groups rated their own health. About 63% of the part-timers rated their health either as excellent or very good compared with 65% of full-timers. Very similar proportions of part-timers and full-timers rated their health good, fair or poor.

### **Chronic conditions**

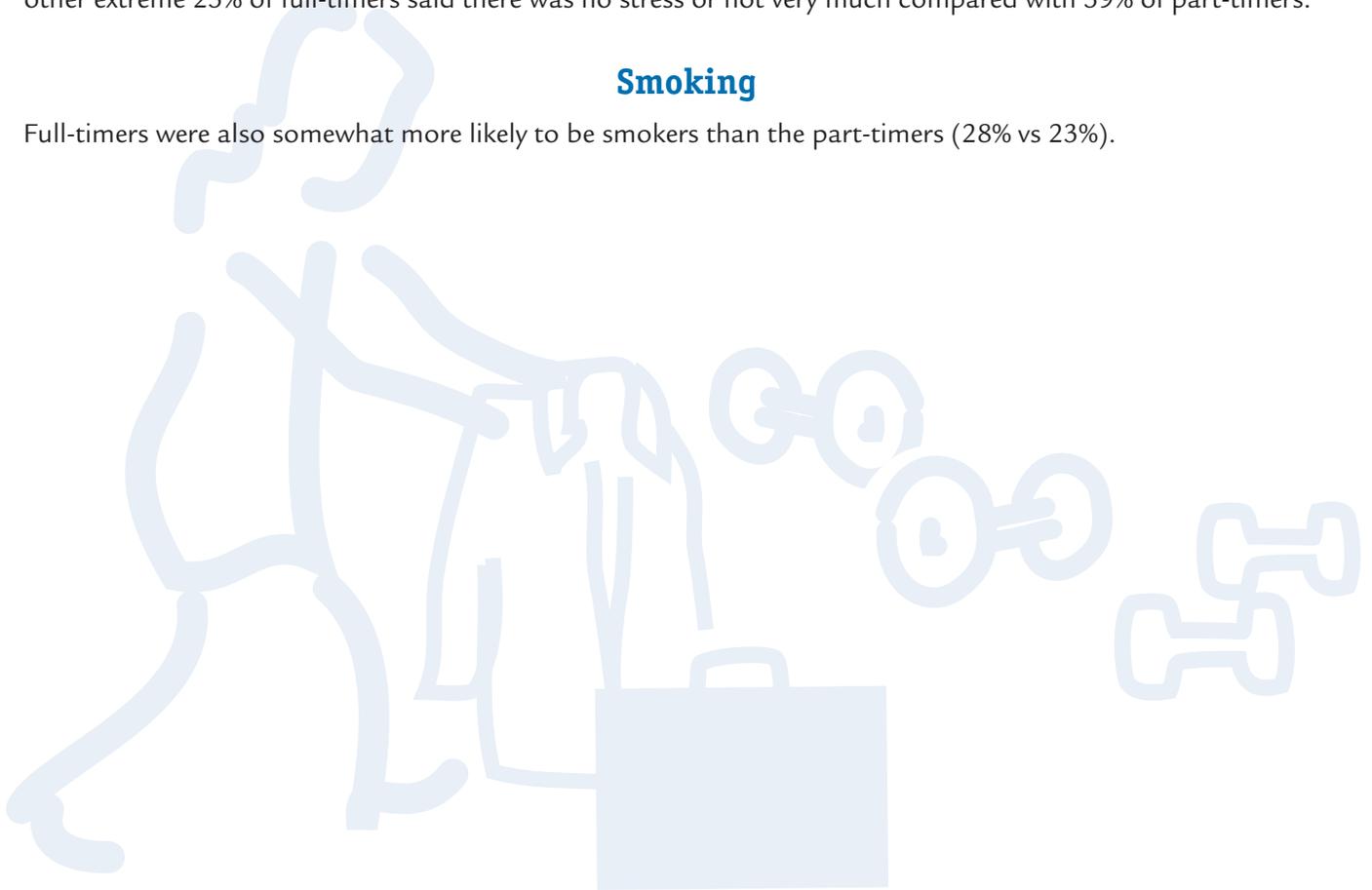
The part-timers were slightly more likely to have arthritis than the full-time workers, (14% vs 11%). However, the two groups had very similar rates of other chronic conditions like high blood pressure (9%), diabetes (3%), heart disease (2%) and cancer (1%).

### **Work stress**

Full-timers were much more likely to perceive high work stress levels than the part-time workers. About 34% rated the amount of work stress as either quite a bit, or extreme, compared with 20% of part-timers. At the other extreme 23% of full-timers said there was no stress or not very much compared with 39% of part-timers.

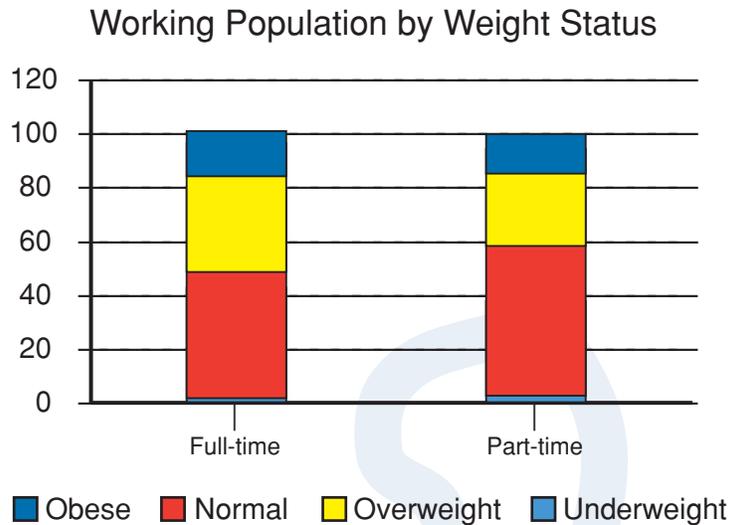
### **Smoking**

Full-timers were also somewhat more likely to be smokers than the part-timers (28% vs 23%).



## Overweight and obesity

The full-time workers had higher levels of obesity (16%) and overweight (36%). Part-timers had 14% obese and 27% overweight. They also had the highest percentage of normal weight (55%) and underweight (4%).



Among the men, full-timers had higher Body Mass Indices (BMIs) than part-timers. (17% obese, 43% overweight versus 13% and 37% among the part-timers). Among the women however the differences between full-timers and part-timers were smaller (full-timers: 14% obese, 25% overweight: part-timers: 14%, 24%).

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# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## Frequency of leisure-time activity

There was almost no difference in the proportion of part-timers and full-timers who were regularly active in their leisure time. Sixty-eight percent of the part-timers were regularly active three times a week or more compared with 67% of the full-timers.

## Physical activity energy expenditure

The two groups were almost identical in attaining the recommended level of physical activity energy expenditure. Overall, 22% were sufficiently active, 27% were moderately active and 51% were inactive.

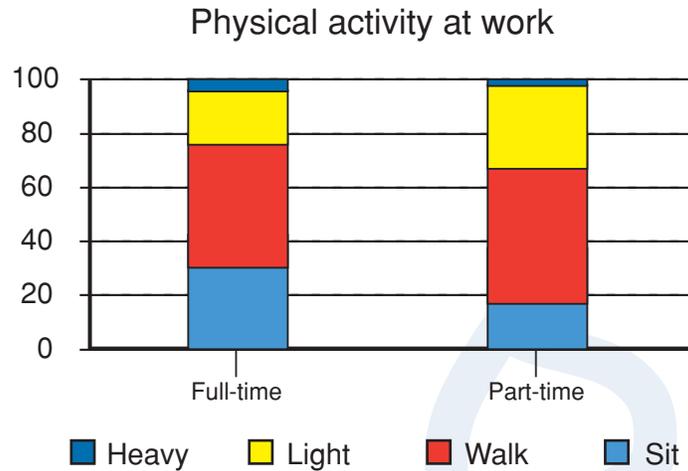
TABLE 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDEX BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	Full-Timers	Self-Employed	Total
<b>Active</b>	22%	23%	22%
<b>Moderate</b>	27%	27%	27%
<b>Inactive</b>	51%	50%	51%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	100%	100%



## Physical activity in the work/school/household setting

The full-timers have both the highest proportion with sedentary jobs (30% vs 17%) and the highest proportion with heavy work (5% vs 3%).



On the other hand, part-timers have the highest concentration in the medium-intensity, standing and walking, and light lifting, categories (80% vs 65%).

## Active commuting

The part-timers were slightly more likely to walk to work than the full-timers (75% spent one or more hours a week walking to work vs 71% of full-timers). The two groups are almost identical in the small proportion who regularly bicycle to work (5%).

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# HEALTH EATING

## Daily vegetable and fruit consumption

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends five servings of vegetables and fruit a day. Part-time employees are slightly more likely to meet the guideline (45%) with full-time employees behind (38%).

## Patterns of avoiding or choosing foods

Overall, there was very little difference between full-time and part-time workers in their pattern of choosing or avoiding foods for health reasons. The part-timers were more likely to choose foods for weight concerns, to prevent heart disease and cancer, and to increase fibre and calcium, reduce salt and reduce cholesterol.

TABLE 2: PERCENT CHOOSING/AVOIDING CERTAIN FOODS FOR REASON

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Weight Concern	48%	53%
Heart Disease	38%	41%
Cancer	26%	30%
Lower Fat	63%	67%
Fibre	51%	56%
Calcium	41%	51%
Salt	40%	43%
Cholesterol	43%	44%

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## ***ACTIONS TO IMPROVE HEALTH***

### **Changes in past year**

- ▶ Part-time workers were more likely to say they did something to improve their health in the past year (68%). Sixty-one percent of full-time workers said they made a similar change.
- ▶ Part-timers were most likely to mention increasing exercise as the change they made (57%) versus 53% of the self-employed.
- ▶ Full-time workers were most likely to cite losing weight (15% vs 14%) and changing eating habits (12% vs 11%).
- ▶ Full-time workers were slightly more likely to cite stopping smoking (11% vs 8%).

### **Changes they should make next year**

- ▶ Full-time workers were most likely to say there was something they should do to improve their health in the next year (74% vs 72%).
- ▶ Part-timers were more likely to cite specific changes -with the exception of smoking. Forty-nine percent of part-timers vs 45% of full-timers cited increasing exercise, 14% vs 13% cited losing weight, 17% vs 16% cited changing eating habits. However 19% of full-timers vs 14% of part-timers mentioned quitting smoking as the main change they should make.

### **Perceived barriers to change**

- ▶ After asking about changes they should make next year to improve health, the survey asked whether there was anything stopping them from making the change.
- ▶ Full-time workers were most likely to say there was something stopping them from making changes (49%) with 48% of part-timers agreeing.
- ▶ Full-timers were most likely to cite lack of time as the barrier preventing them from making changes (38%). Thirty-seven percent of part-timers cited lack of time.
- ▶ Forty-five percent of full-timers mention lack of willpower as the barrier compared with 41% of part-timers.
- ▶ Full-time workers were more likely to mention being too tired or too stressed as barriers while part-timers were more likely to cite cost, and a disability or health problem.

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