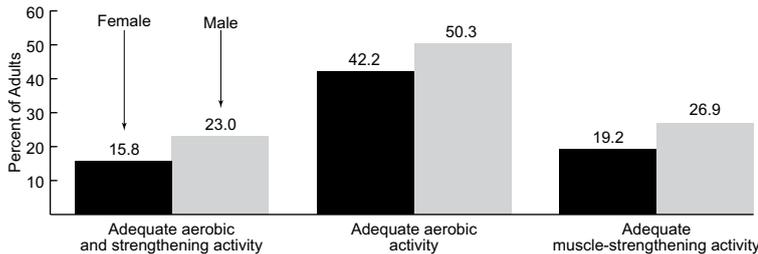


PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity is critical for people of all ages to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, prevent chronic disease, and promote psychological well-being. In older adults, physical activity also helps to prevent falls and improve cognitive functioning.¹ The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans state that for substantial health benefits, adults should engage in at least 2½ hours per week of moderate intensity (e.g., brisk walking or gardening) or 1¼ hours per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (e.g., jogging or kick-boxing), or an equivalent combination of both, plus muscle-strengthening activities on at least 2 days per week. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.¹

Adequate Physical Activity* Among Adults Aged 18 and Older, by Activity Type and Sex, 2008–2010

Source II.1: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Adequate aerobic activity is defined as 2.5 hours per week of moderate-intensity activity or 1.25 hours per week of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of both; adequate muscle-strengthening activity is defined as performing muscle-strengthening activities, such as lifting weights or calisthenics, on 2 or more days per week; all estimates are age-adjusted.

In 2008–2010, 15.8 percent of women met the recommendations for adequate aerobic and muscle-strengthening physical activity, compared to 23.0 percent of men. Women were much more likely to have engaged in adequate amounts of aerobic activity, however, compared to muscle-strengthening activity (42.2 versus 19.2 percent, respectively).

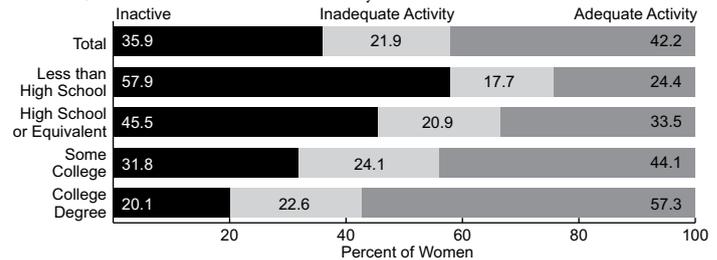
With regard to aerobic activity, about one in five women engaged in an inadequate amount of activity (21.9 percent) and more than one-third reported being inactive (35.9 percent). Inactivity tended to decrease as level of education increased, while the reverse was true for adequate activity. For instance, 57.9 percent of women with less than a high school diploma were inactive, compared to 20.1 percent of women with a college

degree. Similarly, about one-quarter of women who did not graduate high school engaged in adequate aerobic activity, compared to 57.3 percent of women with a college degree.

The proportion of women engaging in aerobic activity also varied with race and ethnicity. Nearly 50 percent of non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women reported being inactive in 2008–2010 (48.6 and 48.4 percent, respectively), compared to less than one-third of non-Hispanic White women (31.0 percent). More than 40 percent of non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native women also reported being inactive (data not shown). This is particularly important because of strong evidence linking sedentary behavior with the onset of multiple chronic diseases.¹

Aerobic Physical Activity Levels* Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Level of Education, 2008–2010

Source II.1: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Adequate aerobic activity is defined as 2.5 hours per week of moderate-intensity activity or 1.25 hours per week of vigorous intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of both; inadequate activity is defined as moderate or vigorous activity for 10 minutes or more per week but less than then recommended level for adequate activity; inactive is defined as no leisure-time aerobic activity that lasted at least 10 minutes.