

CAMPBELL SURVEY RESULTS
FOR OLDER CANADIANS

Prepared for :

**Fitness Development Unit
Fitness Canada**

**George M. Torrance
December 1991**

CAMPBELL SURVEY RESULTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1.0 Demography of Older Adults.....	3
2.0 Current Level of Physical Activity	5
2.1 Pattern of Activity	5
2.2 Energy Expenditure.....	6
2.3 Individual Activity Change from 1981.....	7
2.4 Types of Activities	7
3.0 Context of Activity	8
3.1 Usual Companion	8
3.2 Usual Location.....	9
3.3 Structure of Activity	9
3.4 Social Support for Physical Activity	10
4.0 Barriers to Participation	11
4.1 Choice over Participating in Physical Activity	13
5.0 Attitudes toward Physical Activity	13
5.1 Goals for Spare Time.....	13
5.2 Extent to which Physical Activity Helps Reach Goals	14
5.3 Positive Perceptions of Physical Activity.....	15
5.4 Importance of Factors to Health.....	16
5.5 Self-Rated Health Status.....	16
5.6 Emotional Well-Being.....	17
6.0 Intention for the Future	18
Appendix.....	20

Note: In the following tables, any percentage with an estimated coefficient of variation greater than 33% is followed by a range indicating the approximate 95% confidence interval. These estimates should be treated with caution.

CAMPBELL SURVEY RESULTS FOR OLDER CANADIANS

General Introduction

How active are older Canadians? The Campbell Survey results presented in this report can help to answer that question and many others regarding the physical activity of older Canadians.

The Campbell Survey on Well-Being in Canada was conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute in 1988. The essential purposes of that survey were threefold:

- to provide an update of the 1981 Canada Fitness Survey information
- to examine the contribution of exercise to health
- to investigate adherence over time to a regular exercise routine.

The Campbell Survey tells us about the participation rates and the most popular activities among Canadians. It also helps us to pinpoint the changes in their patterns of physical recreation and physical fitness between 1981 and 1988. As hinted by the survey's name, the advisory committee arrived at the design for the 1988 *well-being* survey by expanding the content of the 1981 Canada Fitness Survey to include more detailed information on such aspects of well-being as nutritional habits, physical and mental health, and attitudes toward physical activity.

The majority of the results were collected from 4000 Canadians by means of a questionnaire completed in select households by all members aged 10 and older. The anthropometric and fitness measurements were taken according to the Canadian Standardized Test of Fitness and collected by qualified fitness testers from household members between 7 and 69 who successfully completed the PAR-Q and agreed to the testing.

In 1990, the highlights of the Campbell Survey have been published in a 130-page report entitled *The Well-Being of Canadians: Highlights of the 1988 Campbell Survey*, written by Dr. T. Stephens and Ms. C.L. Craig. Fitness Canada's need for detailed information about special population groups has led to the publication of specific reports on the survey results as they pertain to youth, older adults, people with activity limitations, the working population, and finally, adults aged 25 to 44 with a maximum education level between grades 9 and 13.

Some of the results presented in these reports already appear in the 1990 report. However, they have the advantage of offering an analysis targeted to a population group and thus prevent the reader from having to extract information embedded in data for the whole population. The present report is part of that series and focuses on Canadians aged 55 and older, with comparisons with the adult population aged 45 to 54.

CAMPBELL SURVEY RESULTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Executive Summary

- For purposes of this report, older adults are defined as Canadians age 55 and over. The report compares men and women aged 55–64, 65–74 and 75+ on a variety of measures of leisure-time physical activity behaviour and attitudes. For comparison purposes, the age group of 45–54 is also included.
- Physical activity participation among older adults follows a bell curve pattern. After reaching a low point in the 45–64 age group, participation picks up after age 65 for both men and women, and seniors up to age 75 have a more regular, sustained pattern of leisure-time physical activity than any age group except children and teenagers. After age 75 participation drops off again.
- Walking and gardening vie for most popular activity across all age–sex groups. The popularity of these activities holds up well even in the oldest age range, particularly among men.
- The proportion of people who participate in physical activity alone increases steadily with age in both sexes, with other family members and friends being the most common companions for those who do not exercise alone. Widows and those in one-person families are most likely to exercise alone.
- The main locations for physical activity for older adults are at home, and outside with no special facilities or in a park. Another fifth do their physical activity in a recreation facility or club until they reach the oldest age bracket, where this declines and home assumes more importance as the location.
- Seniors are less likely than the young to participate in regularly scheduled activities, in activities directed by an instructor, or in competitive activities.
- Social support is strongly related to participation in physical activity. In men, social support for participation increases in the 55–64 group from its low in earlier ages, stays relatively high in the 65–74 group before dropping in the 75+ age group. In women, support remains close to the level it had from age 20 until the 75+ group where it drops sharply. Spouses and children were typically rated as supportive most often up to the oldest age group, where the doctor assumed importance.
- In both sexes, lack of time due to work is the barrier most often cited up to age 55. Lack of self-discipline is second in importance for the younger middle-aged. Lack of time due to family obligations is important for women particularly up to age 55. Lack of energy and incapacity due to illness or injury become progressively more important with age, more so for women than men.
- Older adults rate feeling better mentally, feeling better physically, and getting outdoors as their top spare time goals. Feeling independent also made the top five for all but one of the age–sex subgroups. Vigorous physical activity is seen as making its most important contributions to feeling better physically, improving fitness, feeling better mentally and getting outdoors.
- Most subgroups perceive vigorous physical activity as beneficial, pleasant and fun.

- In ranking the importance of a list of factors to health, older adults rate regular physical activity behind adequate sleep, a good diet, maintaining proper weight, controlling stress and a smoke-free environment. Among both men and women over 45, the 65–74 age group places most importance on physical activity.
- The proportion of older adults rating their health status as very good or good remains surprisingly constant across age levels. Among men, about two-thirds rate their health as very good or good. Among women, about six out of ten across all age groups rate their health as very good or good.
- Those who are active rate their health most highly. About 75% of active older adults age 55 and older versus 55% of inactives rate their health as good or very good.
- Most older adults do not wish to start a new activity in the next year. Among those who do, in the over 65 group the five top activities named are swimming, bowling, walking, golf and bicycling.

CAMPBELL SURVEY RESULTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

The following is restricted to the 55 and over age group. In most of the tables, the age classification used is 55–64, 65–74 and 75+, and, for comparison purposes, 45–54. This classification was chosen to maximize detail for comparison of successive cohorts and also to use an age break that had one category coinciding with the normal retirement age of 65.

Physical activity in middle-aged and older adults is affected by socio-economic and health factors and by role transitions such as retirement. It is useful to review several of these for the Campbell Survey sample at the start.

1.0 Demography of Older Adults

Table O1: Main Activity* by Age and Sex

	Employed Full-time	Employed Part-time	Homemaker Full-time	Retired
Males				
45–54	93	4 (±3)	2 (±2)	2 (±2)
55–64	62	5	1 (±2)	32
65–74	11	6 (±5)	1 (±2)	88
75+	0 (±1)	2 (±4)	5 (±6)	100
Females				
45–54	46	23	42	1 (±2)
55–64	21	15	56	14
65–74	2 (±2)	5 (±3)	60	52
75+	1 (±2)	0 (±1)	42	66

 *Note: Respondents could check more than one activity, so totals will not add to 100%.

Up until the age group 55–64, over 90% of men are employed full-time. In the 55–64 age group, 32% state they are retired. By age 65–74, almost 90% are retired.

In the 45–54 age bracket, about 46% of women say they are employed full-time, another 23% that they are employed part-time and 42% are full-time homemakers. By 55–64, about one-fifth are employed full-time, a smaller proportion part-time, about 56% describe themselves as full-time homemakers and under 15% as retired. In the two older age brackets most describe themselves as either full-time homemakers or retired. The proportion who say they are retired increases in the oldest age bracket relative to the proportion saying they are full-time homemakers.

Table O2: Marital Status by Age and Sex

	Married	Widowed
Males		
45–54	88	1 (± 1)
55–64	85	2 (± 2)
65–74	83	11
75+	67	23
Females		
45–54	81	4
55–64	71	19
65–74	56	33
75+	21	72

The distribution by marital status shows the effect of earlier male mortality. More males than females within any of the older age brackets are married and fewer are widowers/widowed. Already, in the 55–64 age group, almost 19% of women are widows, and this increases to one-third in the 65–74 age bracket and over 70% in the 75+ bracket. By contrast, two-thirds of the males in the oldest bracket are still married.

The Campbell Survey had no question on living arrangements but family size is displayed in the following.

Table O3: Family Size by Age and Sex

	One person	Two persons	Three or more
Males			
45–54	9	21	70
55–64	11	40	49
65–74	13	65	22
75+	35	53	12 (± 9)
Females			
45–54	6	24	70
55–64	15	48	37
65–74	32	54	14
75+	63	26	11 (± 7)

As age increases, family size shrinks, but it shrinks faster for women than for men. Right up to the oldest age range, the majority of men live in families of two or more persons. In the 75+ age bracket, slightly over a third of men are in one-person families.

Among women, by age 65–74, almost a third are in one-person families and in the 75+ group, almost two-thirds are in one-person families. In both sexes, the number living in families of three or more decreases very rapidly from age 45 onward.

Table O4: Family Income by Age and Sex

	< \$25,000	> \$25,000
Males		
45–54	11	89
55–64	28	73
65–74	65	35
75+	71	29
Females		
45–54	18	83
55–64	53	47
65–74	62	38
75+	81	19

More women than men have family incomes below \$25,000 up to age 65. Family income for both sexes takes a big drop after age 65. In the oldest age bracket, women are about 10% more likely to have incomes below \$25,000.

Disability is a significant factor affecting ability to participate in physical activity. In order to achieve consistency with the 1981 Canada Fitness Survey, disability in this report is defined based on responses to questions 35 and 36 on activity limitation. Persons who indicated that they were limited either in work or in leisure-time physical activity because of a long-term illness, or a permanent injury or handicap, were included in the disabled category.

Table O5: Presence of Disability by Age and Sex

	Disabled	Not Disabled
Males		
45–54	13	87
55–64	21	79
65–74	31	69
75+	39	61
Females		
45–54	20	81
55–64	31	69
65–74	36	64
75+	38	62

Disability increases steadily with age. In the 55–64 age group, about two out of ten men and three out of ten women are disabled. In the 65–74 group, the rates increase to 31% of men and 36% of women. In the oldest group, almost four out of ten of both sexes have a disability.

2.0 Current Level of Physical Activity

2.1 Pattern of Activity

The active living philosophy encourages incorporating physical activity as a regular part of one's way of life. A measure of this combines the average frequency of participation with the average duration, regardless of the intensity. The following table shows the percentage of older adults who participate in physical activity at various levels of frequency and duration.

Table O6: Pattern of Leisure Physical Activity by Age and Sex

	Every other day		Irregular/ None
	> 30 min	< 30 min	
Males			
45–54	42	18	41
55–64	47	12	41
65–74	60	12	28
75+	55	7 (±8)	38
Females			
45–54	46	16	39
55–64	39	20	41
65–74	54	17	30
75+	18	32	50

Regular participation in physical activity increases for both men and women after age 65 up to about age 75. The proportion who participate on average every other day for at least 30 minutes at a time rises by about 15% from the 55–64 to the 65–74 age category. In the 75+ age range, it begins to decrease again, especially among older women.

2.2 Energy Expenditure

The energy expenditure measure classifies the population into three levels, active (3+ KKD), moderate (1.5–2.9 KKD) and inactive (0–1.4 KKD).

Table O7: Activity Level (Energy Expenditure) by Age and Sex

	Inactive	Moderate	Active
Males			
45–54	47	24	30
55–64	44	26	30
65–74	39	18	44
75+	40	24	36
Females			
45–54	52	26	22
55–64	63	19	18
65–74	45	27	28
75+	76	16	9 (±7)

There is a substantial jump in activity level between the 55–64 and the 65–74 age bracket for both sexes. The increase roughly coincides with retirement age. Rates then drop off in the 75+, especially for women. (The women in this age group are older than the men.) A higher proportion of men are in the active category in the four age groups.

The Well-Being report used several other measures of activity. It showed that seniors were by far the most likely of any age group to exercise at an appropriate level for 30+ minutes every other day (partly because they required less intensity to reach the appropriate target level).

2.3 Individual Activity Change from 1981

Based on changes in activity reported for the same individuals in the 1981 Canada Fitness Survey and the 1988 Campbell Survey, the Well-Being report was able to characterize individuals as adhering, starting, lapsing or resisting in terms of their physical activity level. Because of small numbers, it is necessary to combine categories in the following table.

Table O8: Individual Activity Change by Age and Sex

	Adhere/ Start	Lapse/ Resist
Males		
45–54	63	38
55–64	58	42
65+	61	39
Females		
45–54	48	52
55–64	37	63
65+	47	53

For both sexes, there is an interesting pattern whereby the proportion who adhere or start declines in the 55–64 age group, then rises again in the 65+. The pattern is more pronounced among women. This is consistent with the cross-sectional findings above of higher rates in the 65+ age group, but this table confirms it with data on individual change over time.

2.4 Types of Activities

The following table summarizes the most popular activities among older adults and shows the percent mentioning each.

Table O9: Most Popular Activities by Age and Sex

		45–54		55–64	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
Garden	75	Walk	79	Walk	75
Walk	64	Garden	72	Garden	62
Swim	39	Dance	37	Swim	32
Dance	32	Home ex	35	Dance	31
Cycle	32	Swim	31	Home ex	25
Golf	30	Cycle	28	Golf	24
		65–74		75+	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
Garden	76	Walk	78	Walk	61
Walk	74	Garden	56	Garden	42
Home ex	36	Home ex	33	Home ex	35
Dance	25	Swim	22	Swim	9 (±7)
Swim	22	Dance	18	Dance	8 (±7)
Cycle	22	Cycle	12	Bowl	5 (±5)
				Bowl	9 (±9)

Walking and gardening vie for most popular activity across all age–sex groups. The popularity of these activities holds up well even in the oldest age range, particularly among men. Swimming for men and dancing for women hold third place until age 65, when home exercise assumes precedence. Cycling consistently makes the top six until age 75. Golf also makes the list for men in the under 65 group.

3.0 Context of Activity

3.1 Usual Companion

Table O10: Usual Companion for Physical Activity by Age and Sex

	No one	Friends	Family
Males			
45–54	42	25	26
55–64	47	21	27
65–74	57	15	23
75+	64	19	13 (±11)
Females			
45–54	46	19	29
55–64	52	24	21
65–74	53	24	21
75+	69	26	3 (±5)

The proportion of people who participate in physical activity alone increases steadily with age in both sexes. Among women, a sharp increase takes place from the 65–74 to the 75+ age group.

The following two tables explore the reasons for this in more detail. The first shows usual companion by family size for the combined 55+ age group, the second usual companion by marital status.

Table O12: Usual Companion by Family Size (Combined 55+ Age Group)

	Family Size		
Usual companion	One person	Two persons	Three or more
No one	66	51	50
Friends	26	21	20
Family	4 (±3)	25	25

Table O13: Usual Companion by Marital Status (Combined 55+ Age Group)

	Marital status	
Usual companion	Married	Other
No one	50	62
Friends	19	28
Family	27	6

Sixty-six percent of those in one-person families exercise alone compared to 50% of those in families of three or more members. As could be expected, the difference is almost entirely due to the absence of participation with immediate family members in the case of those in one-person families. Friends compensate to a certain extent, but not enough to make up the difference.

Marital status shows the same effect but on a lesser scale. About half of the married as opposed to 62% of those who are widowed, divorced, separated or single, exercise alone. It should be noted however that the effects of being in a one-person family and/or being single are far from all-determining. There are plenty of people with larger families who exercise alone, and there is a substantial minority from one-person families who exercise with others.

3.2 Usual Location

Table O14: Usual Location of Physical Activity by Age and Sex

	Home	Outside/ Park	Rec facil
Males			
45-54	30	32	25
55-64	31	39	19
65-74	38	31	22
75+	40	28	12 (±11)
Females			
	Home	Outside/ Park	Rec facil
45-54	33	43	17
55-64	42	29	20
65-74	37	34	21
75+	54	28	9 (±8)

Home, and outside with no special facilities or in a park, were the main locations for physical activity for older adults. Another fifth do their physical activity in a recreation facility or club until they reach the oldest age bracket, where this declines and home assumes more importance as the location.

3.3 Structure of Activity

Question 11B asked whether their usual weekly activity was scheduled at specific times, directed by an instructor, competitive and casual. The following table shows the percent of those 45-64 and 65+ not indicating each of these.

Table O15: Percent Not Indicating that Weekly Activity Was Structured

	Males		Females	
	45-64	65+	45-64	65+
Not scheduled	77	85	79	81
Not directed	97	96	92	89
Not competitive	94	96	96	98
Not casual	57	49	56	49

Seniors were less likely to participate in regularly scheduled activities, in activities directed by an instructor and in competitive activities and more likely to participate on a casual basis. This reflects the fact that their main activities were walking, gardening and so on, which were individualistic and able to be freely scheduled.

3.4 Social Support for Physical Activity

Respondents were asked how much various people encouraged them to participate regularly in vigorous physical activity on a five-point scale from "encourages me/very supportive" to "discourages me/very negative." The top two scale categories were combined to derive the following table.

In general, fewer than half the people in any of the 45+ age-sex groups reported receiving support from any one significant other. Spouses and children were typically rated as supportive most often up to the oldest age group, where the doctor assumed importance. More men than women rate their spouse as supportive in the 65+ age group, perhaps partly reflecting the high proportion of widows among the women.

Table O16: Percent Indicating Support from Following Sources

	Spouse	Children	Other family	Friends	Doctor
Males					
44-54	45	44	18	26	39
55-64	52	47	27	33	40
65-74	47	43	29	31	42
75+	40	30	26	32	48
Females					
44-54	41	47	25	32	37
55-64	36	44	25	31	37
65-74	25	47	27	36	44
75+	9 (±7)	30	24	35	42

The following shows the combined index of social support used in the Well-Being report. It was necessary to combine the neutral and discourage categories because the size of the discourage category was small. In males, support increases in the 55-64 group from its low in earlier ages, stays relatively high in the 65-74 group before dropping somewhat in the 75+ age group. In females, support remains close to the level it had from age 20 until the 75+ group where it drops sharply.

Table O17: Index of Social Support by Age and Sex

	Encourage	Neutral/ Discourage
Males		
44-54	25	76
55-64	35	65
65-74	35	65
75+	27	73
	Encourage	Neutral/ Discourage
Females		
44-54	31	69
55-64	27	73
65-74	33	67
75+	19	81

Social support is strongly related to actual participation in physical activity, as the following table for the combined 55+ age group shows.

**Table O18: Physical Activity Level by Social Support
(Combined 55+ age group)**

	Encourage	Neutral/ Discourage
Inactive	33	55
Moderate	25	23
Active	42	22

In the combined 55+ age group, of those with a high level of social support, 42% were active and 33% inactive. Of those with a lower level of social support, 22% were active and 55% were inactive.

4.0 Barriers to Participation

The importance of various factors in preventing people from being more active was rated on a five-point scale from very important to not at all important. For the following table, the top two scale categories were combined in coding the factor as important.

In both sexes, lack of time due to work is the barrier most often cited up to age 55. Lack of self-discipline is second in importance for the younger middle-aged. Lack of time due to family obligations is important for women, particularly up to age 55. Lack of energy and incapacity due to illness or injury become progressively more important with age, more so for women than men. In the oldest group of women, almost half cite disability, over a third cite lack of energy and almost a third cite fear of injury as barriers to vigorous physical activity.

Table O19: Percent Indicating Barrier Was Important in Preventing More Participation

	Male			
	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
time - work/school	49	33	8	2 (±5)
time - family	21	17	7 (±5)	3 (±6)
time - other interests	19	21	7 (±5)	8 (±9)
energy	18	21	15	21 (±13)
skills	15	16	9	21 (±13)
programs/leaders	9	8	7 (±5)	3 (±6)
partner	11	11	6 (±5)	5 (±7)
support family/friends	4	11	3 (±4)	2 (±5)
babysitting	2 (±2)	2 (±2)	1 (±2)	0 (±1)
cost	9	8	7 (±5)	3 (±6)
self-discipline	31	24	21	12 (±11)
ill at ease	6	6	7 (±5)	8 (±9)
illness/disability	10	18	19	20 (±13)
fear of injury	9	10	6 (±5)	10 (±10)

	Female			
	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
time - work/school	44	24	8	8 (±7)
time - family	33	17	11	10 (±8)
time - other interests	21	21	15	5 (±6)
energy	26	29	24	37
skills	22	26	22	25
programs/leaders	8	13	11	12 (±9)
partner	16	23	18	20
support family/friends	7	11	8	7
babysitting	1 (±1)	1 (±1)	0 (±1)	0 (±1)
cost	13	12	8	12 (±9)
self-discipline	39	29	20	11 (±8)
ill at ease	15	13	8	11 (±8)
illness/disability	19	29	28	48
fear of injury	13	18	17	32

It is interesting that barriers related to social support did not figure prominently, given that positive social support is related to actual participation. The only support-related barrier mentioned by a significant proportion of people was lack of a partner, considered important by 23% of women aged 55–64.

When the three support-related barriers—lack of programs, lack of a partner and lack of family support—are combined into one variable for the 55+ age group, 26% of women and 16% of men rated one or more of these as important. The following table cross-tabulates the index of social support with this variable to see if (actual) support is related to seeing lack of support as a barrier.

Table O20: Support Seen as a Barrier by Social Support Index (Combined 55+ Age Group)

	Encourage	Neutral/ Discourage
Yes	24	21
No	76	79

There is virtually no relationship between perceived social support and seeing lack of support as a barrier among older adults. Indeed, those with high support are slightly more likely to cite lack of support as a barrier than those with low social support. We are thus left with the enigma that social support is strongly related to participation, but lack of structure and support is not considered a major barrier to participation.

4.1 Choice over Participating in Physical Activity

Question 20 asked "All things considered, how much choice do you have over whether you participate regularly in vigorous physical activity?" Response options were on a five-point scale ranging from "completely my choice" to "too many constraints imposed on me." Question 23 asked "Would you agree or disagree that, if you wanted to, you could easily participate in vigorous physical activity 3 or more times a week for at least 20 minutes at a time?" Responses were on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For the following tables, the top two scale categories were combined.

Table O21: Percent Indicating They Have Choice and Could Easily Participate More by Age and Sex

	Have choice	Could easily do more
Males		
44-54	62	61
55-64	68	59
65-74	69	42
75+	66	35
Females		
44-54	61	53
55-64	59	45
65-74	74	37
75+	65	31

There is an interesting difference between the answers to these two questions according to the age of the respondents. The perception of having control/choice actually increases in the 65+ age group, probably due to decreased time pressures after retirement. However, the percent agreeing that they could easily participate in vigorous physical activity three times a week for 20 minutes at a time declines sharply with age, probably reflecting the increased prevalence of disability, also perhaps the term 'vigorous' in the question.

5.0 Attitudes toward Physical Activity

5.1 Goals for Spare Time

The second question on the Campbell Survey asked respondents to rate the importance of various listed goals for their spare time. Appendix Table O22 gives a detailed breakdown of the percentage indicating that each goal was important by age and sex. Table O23 summarizes the top five goals.

Table O23: Top Five Goals for Spare Time in Each Age–Sex Group

		45–54		
Males			Females	
Feel better mentally	79		Feel better mentally	86
Feel better physically	76		Feel better physically	79
Relax	70		Get outdoors	75
Get outdoors	66		Feel independent	72
Feel independent	64		Control weight	71
55–64				
Feel better mentally	85		Feel better mentally	88
Feel better physically	82		Feel better physically	84
Feel independent	74		Control weight	74
Get outdoors	73		Get outdoors	71
Improving fitness	60		Relax	69
65–74				
Feel better physically	82		Feel better mentally	85
Get outdoors	75		Feel better physically	85
Feel better mentally	74		Get outdoors	82
Feel independent	72		Feel independent	77
Improving fitness	66		Improving fitness	70
75+				
Feel better mentally	79		Feel better mentally	83
Feel better physically	78		Feel better physically	81
Get outdoors	73		Feel independent	79
Feel independent	73		Get outdoors	74
Relax	64		Improving fitness	71

In general, the spare time goals for older adults are similar to those of the rest of the population. One exception is feeling independent, which makes the top five for all but one of the age–sex subgroups (women age 55–64). Also, relaxing is accorded less importance than in the younger adult population. The main difference between men and women is the importance of weight control, which women value more highly up to age 65 at least.

5.2 Extent to which Physical Activity Helps Reach Goals

A detailed table (O24) describing the extent to which vigorous physical activity helps to achieve spare time goals is presented in the appendix. In general, vigorous physical activity is seen as making its most important contributions to feeling better physically, improving fitness, feeling better mentally and getting outdoors. There is an interesting age gradient in the contribution vigorous activity makes to relaxation, with respondents seeing it as less helpful as they get older. In terms of feeling independent, the gradient works in the opposite direction with older respondents seeing an increased contribution. However, there is a substantial discrepancy between the percent who value feeling independent as an important goal, and the percent who feel physical activity helps them to reach it, particularly among older women.

Women in particular, but also a large proportion of men, see physical activity as helping to control weight and look better. This declines in the older age groups.

5.3 Positive Perceptions of Physical Activity

The Campbell Survey asked a question (Q 19) about how people felt about participating in physical activity. On a five-point scale, they asked whether it was:

- boring fun
- beneficialharmful
- unpleasant.....pleasant
- convenient ...inconvenient
- painful not painful
- easy difficult

Responses were recoded into positive (top two scale points), neutral (middle scale point) and negative (bottom two scale points). The following table shows the percent giving a positive response in each of the four age–sex groups.

Table O25: Percent Giving Positive Response to Vigorous Physical Activity

	Males			
	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
Fun	47	49	51	55
Beneficial	79	68	68	62
Pleasant	50	58	54	58
Convenient	22	35	39	47
Not painful	48	58	45	58
Easy	24	32	37	50
	Females			
	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
Fun	45	50	54	63
Beneficial	76	69	76	79
Pleasant	49	57	65	68
Convenient	25	34	37	51
Not painful	41	39	56	63
Easy	21	25	26	39

The aspect of vigorous physical activity that was recognized most positively was its beneficial nature. Over two-thirds in most subgroups recognized this. The next most favourably perceived aspects were that it was pleasant and fun. The least positive aspects were its convenience and ease, with a substantial majority of the subgroups seeing it negatively in these terms. Somewhat surprisingly, older men and women in the 75+ age group had the most positive perceptions about physical activity being easy, convenient and not painful.

The following table investigates whether there is a difference between disabled and non-disabled seniors (age 55+) in perceptions of vigorous physical activity

Table O26: Percent Giving Positive Response Regarding Vigorous Physical Activity by Presence of Disability (Combined 55+ age group)

	Disability	No disability
Fun	54	51
Beneficial	66	72
Pleasant	57	60
Convenient	35	39
Not painful	41	56
Easy	47	29

Although disabled older adults are slightly more likely to see vigorous physical activity as fun, a considerably larger proportion see it as difficult and painful.

5.4 Importance of Factors to Health

Table O27: Percent Saying Factor Is Important to Health

	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
	Males			
Sleep	86	91	89	91
Diet	73	77	86	81
Weight	65	74	80	76
Social participation	29	32	38	37
Stress control	74	71	68	66
Physical activity	55	57	66	58
Smoke-free environment	57	57	67	60
	Females			
Sleep	92	93	91	94
Diet	87	88	95	85
Weight	79	83	87	77
Social participation	46	51	52	53
Stress control	79	75	79	75
Physical activity	51	50	65	59
Smoke-free environment	66	68	75	73

For all subgroups, adequate sleep is the factor considered most important to health. Among men 45–54, stress control comes a surprising second, but in the other groups, diet typically comes second. As usual, weight control is seen as more important by women than men, but the difference diminishes with age. Stress control and a smoke-free environment are usually ranked next. Physical activity is generally second-last in importance and social participation is seen as least important to health. Among both men and women, the 65–74 age group places most importance on physical activity.

5.5 Self-Rated Health Status

Self-rated health is one of the most powerful predictors of longevity and functional capacity. The following table shows how older adults in the Campbell Survey rated their own health.

Table O28: Self-Rated Health Status by Age and Sex

	Male			
	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
Very good/Good	65	63	68	68
Average/Poor	35	37	32	32
	Female			
Very good/Good	60	60	59	61
Average/Poor	40	40	41	39

The proportion rating their health as very good or good remains surprisingly constant across age levels. Among men, about two-thirds rate their health as very good or good, with the proportion actually increasing slightly in the older groups. Among women, about six out of ten across all age groups rate their health as very good or good.

The following table shows the relationship between activity level and self-rated health for the combined 55+ age group.

**Table O29: Self-Rated Health Status by Activity Level
(Combined 55+ age group)**

	Inactive	Moderate	Active
Very good/Good	55	65	75
Average/Poor	45	35	25

There is a linear relationship between activity level and self-rated health. About 75% of active adults versus 55% of inactives rate their health as good or very good.

5.6 Emotional Well-Being

The Campbell Survey used two scales to measure emotional well-being, the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale and the CES-Depression scale. The following table uses the same cutting-points as the Well-Being report to compare age–sex groups on these measures.

**Table O30: Percent with Positive Affect on Bradburn Scale and
Percent Not Depressed on Depression Scale**

	Positive affect	Not depressed
Males		
44–54	27	92
55–64	31	93
65–74	35	92
75+	36	98
Females		
44–54	33	91
55–64	36	83
65–74	43	90
75+	50	88

Older adults display the highest levels of positive affect of any group in the sample. In both sexes, positive affect increases with age, reaching its highest level in those 75+. Depression is more complex, however, with women aged 55–64 displaying one of the higher levels in the sample.

**Table O31: Percent With Positive Affect by Activity Level
(Combined 55+ age group)**

	Inactive	Moderate	Active
Positive affect	35	36	42

Physical activity does not appear to be as strongly related to positive affect in older adults as it is in younger groups. Among those 55 and over, the actives are 6–7% more likely to display positive affect than the moderates and inactives.

6.0 Intention for the Future

Table O32: Percent Not Wanting to Start an Activity

	45–54	55–64	65–74	75+
Males	65	66	84	96
Females	57	64	76	87

Up until the 65+ age bracket, about two-thirds of both sexes do not want to start a new activity in the next year. In the 65–74, bracket, this increases to over 80% of the men and three-quarters of the women. In the oldest age bracket, 96% of men and 87% of women have no new activities they would like to start.

**Table O33: Want to Start an Activity by Present Activity Level
(Combined 55+ age group)**

	Inactive	Moderate	Active
No	76	72	70
Yes	24	28	31

In the combined 55+ age group, people who are currently active are more likely than those who are inactive to want to start a new activity. About 31% of those active already, versus 24% of those inactive, want to start an activity.

Although the numbers are too small for detailed presentation, the five top activities named as activities they would like to start by those 65 and older in order of popularity are swimming, bowling, walking, golf and bicycling. Swimming, bowling and walking were named considerably more frequently than the next two activities.

Table O34: Intentions for Frequency of Participation in Next Year by Age and Sex

	< once a week	> once a week
Males		
45–54	38	62
55–64	43	57
65–74	51	50
75+	51	49
Females		
45–54	33	67
55–64	47	53
65–74	48	52
75+	77	23

In both sexes, the proportion who intend to participate regularly in vigorous physical activity in the next year declines in each age cohort. By the 65–74 age group, about half plan to either not participate at all or do so less than once a week. In the men this remains constant in the 75+ bracket but in the women it increases to over three-quarters. It should be emphasized that the question refers to vigorous physical activity, and that the proportions already participating regularly in less intensive activities is higher.

Appendix

Table O22: Percent Indicating Goal Is Important

	Males			
	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Relax	70	57	60	64
Socialize	44	51	44	41
Have fun	55	51	46	49
Earn money	39	43	25	18
Get outdoors	66	73	75	73
Compete	29	31	24	19
Feel independent	64	74	72	73
Feel better mentally	79	85	74	79
Feel better physically	76	82	82	78
Fitness	55	60	67	63
Challenge	55	50	54	39
Control weight	53	56	50	56
Take risks	22	26	16	17 (±12)

	Females			
	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Relax	70	69	68	64
Socialize	64	60	60	57
Have fun	49	45	50	55
Earn money	43	34	17	17
Get outdoors	75	71	82	74
Compete	28	30	21	26
Feel independent	72	69	77	79
Feel better mentally	86	88	85	83
Feel better physically	79	84	85	81
Fitness	63	66	70	71
Challenge	66	68	52	49
Control weight	71	74	70	53
Take risks	21	16	16	19

Table O24: Percent Saying Vigorous Physical Activity Helps in Reaching Spare Time Goals

	Males			
	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Relax	66	59	48	42
Socialize	40	48	46	29
Have fun	50	56	57	45
Earn money	7	7 (±4)	10	3 (±6)
Get outdoors	72	66	69	75
Compete	18	15	20	7 (±9)
Feel independent	34	43	51	59
Feel better mentally	77	70	72	66
Feel better physically	82	76	74	68
Challenge	42	41	41	20 (±13)
Look better	58	57	54	46
Control weight	65	59	55	47
Take risks	20	19	19	3 (±6)
Fitness	75	70	68	63
CV fitness	80	70	67	55
Strength	70	63	65	53
Flexibility	72	67	66	64
			Females	
Relax	66	58	53	52
Socialize	48	51	46	48
Have fun	54	53	51	54
Earn money	8	5	3 (±1)	5 (±6)
Get outdoors	72	71	71	59
Compete	10	7	7 (±4)	7 (±7)
Feel independent	36	37	52	56
Feel better mentally	76	74	70	65
Feel better physically	81	78	72	73
Challenge	46	46	48	40
Look better	79	73	69	42
Control weight	77	75	60	41
Take risks	20	16	16	21
Fitness	80	73	71	60
CV fitness	80	73	69	50
Strength	73	63	59	54
Flexibility	78	68	65	58