

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Everybody is satisfied with their participation in leisure and recreation activities. They have sufficient time to do what they want to do and can access an adequate range of opportunities for leisure and recreation.

Leisure and Recreation

INTRODUCTION

Leisure and recreation are both crucial components of a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Leisure time is a time when people can do what they want to do, away from work and other commitments.

Recreation and leisure play an important role in social wellbeing by providing people with a sense of identity and personal autonomy. Involvement in leisure-time activities adds meaning to individual and community life and contributes to people's overall quality of life. Recreation can encourage personal growth and self-expression and provide increased learning opportunities, satisfying needs not met in people's non-leisure time.

For many people, participation in leisure and recreation improves their physical and mental health. Recreation often involves a physical activity or sport. Research clearly shows increased physical activity can lead to fewer health problems and higher productivity at work, especially when combined with a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.

The benefits for mental health are equally important. Several studies have demonstrated links between regular physical activity and a reduction in the symptoms of mild or moderate depression, stress and anxiety. Passive leisure also has benefits for mental health, by providing an outlet for the mind. It may provide physical rest, tension release and opportunities to enjoy nature and escape from the daily routine.

Participation in leisure and recreation activities can also have social benefits. It creates opportunities for socialisation and contributes to social cohesion by allowing people to connect and network with others. It can also contribute to family bonding when families do things together in their leisure time.

INDICATORS

Three indicators are used in this chapter. They are: satisfaction with leisure time, participation in physical activity and participation in cultural and arts activities. Together, these indicators present a picture of how people feel about their leisure time and also what they do in their leisure time.

The first indicator is satisfaction with leisure time. This measures how people feel about both the quantity and quality of leisure time available to them.

The second indicator measures people's participation in physical activity. It gives us a sense of how active New Zealanders are. Moderate physical activity can improve a number of health outcomes.

The final indicator measures people's involvement in cultural and arts activities. Cultural activities contribute to individual growth and provide opportunities for social cohesion and passing on cultural traditions.

Satisfaction with leisure time

DEFINITION

The proportion of people aged 15 years and over who are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their leisure time as reported in the Quality of Life Survey 2006.

RELEVANCE

Leisure time is a crucial component of a balanced and healthy lifestyle. It is a time when people can do what they want to, separate from work and other commitments.

CURRENT LEVEL

According to the Quality of Life Survey 2006, almost three-quarters of New Zealanders (73 percent) were satisfied overall with their leisure time. Of these, 42 percent were satisfied and 31 percent were very satisfied.

Figure L1.1

Satisfaction with leisure time, people aged 15 years and over, 2006

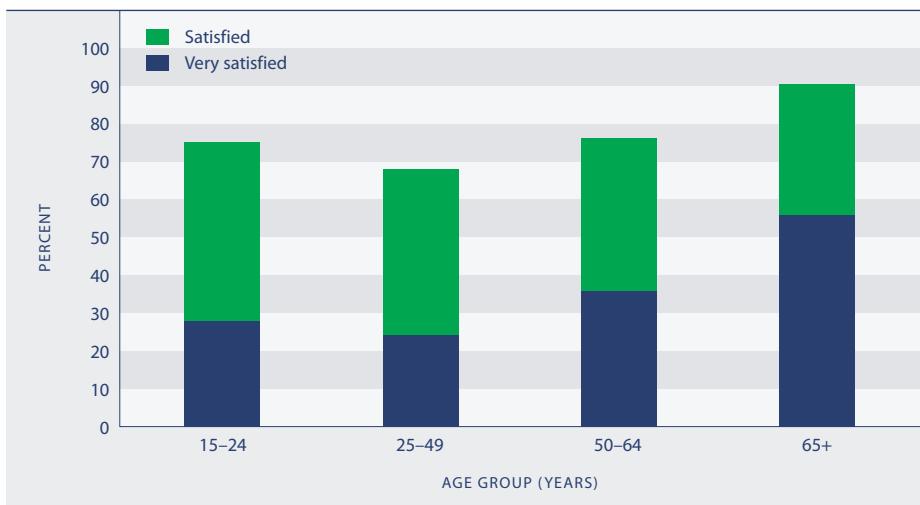


Source: Quality of Life Survey 2006

AGE DIFFERENCES

While the majority of New Zealanders were satisfied with their leisure time, those aged 25–49 years were less satisfied overall (67 percent). This age group tends to have larger work and family commitments than other groups, which may impinge on the time available for leisure. In comparison, those aged 15–24 years and those aged 50–64 years were more likely to report being satisfied with their leisure time, with total satisfaction levels of 75 percent and 76 percent respectively. People aged 65 years and over reported the highest levels of overall satisfaction with their leisure time (90 percent).

Figure L1.2

Satisfaction with leisure time, by age, 2006

Source: Quality of Life Survey 2006

SEX DIFFERENCES

There was little difference between the sexes in reported satisfaction with leisure time. Seventy-four percent of men and 72 percent of women reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their leisure time.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Most New Zealanders, regardless of their ethnicity, were satisfied with their leisure time. In 2006, the European ethnic group (75 percent) and Pacific peoples (73 percent) had higher levels of satisfaction with their leisure time than Māori (68 percent) or Asian New Zealanders (63 percent). The small remaining group of people from the Other ethnic group reported the highest level of total satisfaction (76 percent).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

People's levels of satisfaction with their leisure time varied slightly by the levels of their personal income, but not in a consistent way. In 2006, satisfaction with leisure time was highest for people with an annual personal income of \$20,000 or less, with 77 percent of the people in this income range saying they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their leisure time. Two income groups had below average levels of satisfaction – those with a personal income between \$50,001 and \$70,000 (66 percent), and those with an income between \$70,001 and \$100,000 (69 percent).

Figure L1.3

Satisfaction with leisure time, by personal income, 2006

Source: Quality of Life Survey 2006

Participation in physical activity

DEFINITION

The proportion of adults aged 15 years and over who were sufficiently physically active, as measured by the Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) Continuous Monitoring Survey.

Being sufficiently active means they took part in at least 2.5 hours of physical activity and did five or more sessions (half an hour or more) in the seven days before being interviewed. Highly active means doing some vigorous physical activity during the week in addition to the requirements for being rated as sufficiently active.

RELEVANCE

Participation in physical activity is a source of enjoyment and has positive benefits for people's physical and mental health. It can also contribute to personal growth and development and is a good way to meet new people.

CURRENT LEVEL

Seventy-two percent of adults aged 15 years and over were reported to be sufficiently active in 2006. This was similar to the figure in 2005 (71 percent). Nearly half (46 percent) were rated as highly active.

Table L2.1 **Activity level (%) of adults, by sex, 2006**

Activity level	Adults 15 years and over		
	Males	Females	All
Sedentary	5	6	6
Insufficiently active	17	24	21
Sufficiently active	23	28	26
Highly active	53	39	46
Don't know	2	2	2
Active	76	67	72
Inactive	22	30	27

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2007)

SEX DIFFERENCES

Men were more likely than women to be sufficiently active in 2006. Seventy-six percent of men did at least 2.5 hours and five or more sessions of physical activity a week, compared to 67 percent of women. Men were also much more likely to be highly active (53 percent) compared with women (39 percent).

AGE DIFFERENCES

Activity levels tend to decline with age. In 2006, the percentage of people categorised as either sufficiently active or highly active was highest for 15–24 year olds (84 percent), followed by those aged 25–34 years (74 percent), those in the 35–49 and 50–64 years age groups (both 70 percent) and those aged 65–74 (64 percent). Those aged 75 years and over had the lowest activity rate (56 percent).

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

There was some variation in the activity levels of the main ethnic groups. In 2006, the percentage of people categorised as either sufficiently active or highly active was highest for adults of European ethnicity (74 percent) followed by Māori (72 percent), Pacific peoples (66 percent) and Asian (65 percent) adults. Māori and Pacific peoples were the most likely to be highly active, with more than half of each ethnic group in this category (54 percent and 51 percent respectively).

Table L2.2 **Activity level (%) of adults, by ethnicity, 2006**

	New Zealand European	Māori	Pacific peoples	Asian
Sedentary	5	5	8	7
Insufficiently active	19	21	23	28
Sufficiently active	28	18	15	22
Highly active	46	54	51	43
Don't know	2	2	3	0
Active	74	72	66	65
Inactive	24	26	31	35

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2007)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

Activity levels rise with household income. People living in households with an annual household income (adjusted for the number of children and adults in the household) of \$20,000 or less had the lowest levels of activity, with 66 percent being sufficiently active or highly active. Those in the top two income brackets of \$70,001 and over and \$50,001–\$70,000 had the highest levels of activity (77 percent and 76 percent respectively). These two groups were also the most likely to be highly active (54 percent and 49 percent respectively).

Table L2.3 **Activity level (%) of adults, by adjusted household income, 2006**

	\$20,000 or less	\$20,001– \$30,000	\$30,001– \$50,000	\$50,001– \$70,000	\$70,001 or more
Sedentary	7	6	5	6	3
Insufficiently active	24	24	24	18	17
Sufficiently active	30	31	24	27	23
Highly active	36	38	46	49	54
Don't know	3	2	1	0	2
Active	66	69	70	76	77
Inactive	31	30	29	22	20

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2007)

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Activity levels were lower in the seven local authorities in the Auckland area (68 percent) than in the rest of New Zealand (74 percent). People in the South Island reported higher activity levels (76 percent) than people in either the central or southern North Island (both 72 percent). See Appendix 2 for local authorities included in each region.

Participation in cultural and arts activities

DEFINITION

The proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who had experienced one or more of the cultural activities included in the 2002 Cultural Experiences Survey.

Respondents were asked to report on activities they experienced over either a 12-month period (for goods and services accessed or experienced relatively infrequently) or a four-week recall period (for activities experienced on a more regular basis).

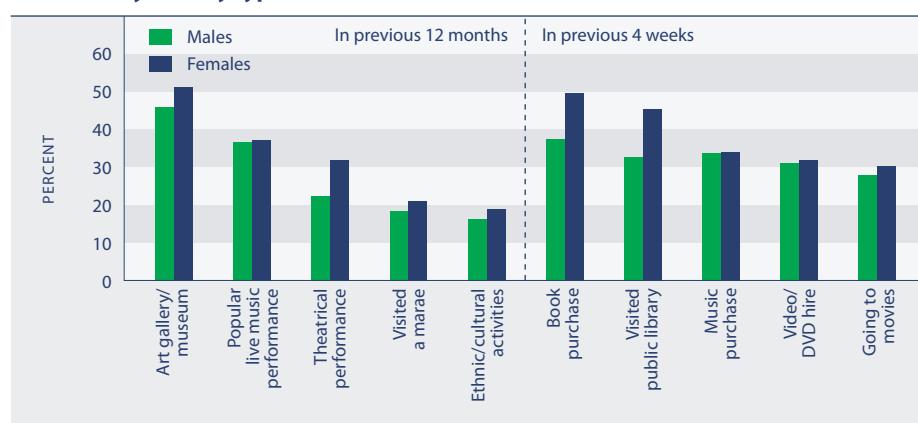
RELEVANCE

Cultural activities are an integral part of leisure and recreation. People participate in cultural activities for a wide variety of reasons: for enjoyment and entertainment, for personal growth and development, as a means of expression, to learn new skills, to meet new people and to pass on cultural traditions.

CURRENT LEVEL

Ninety-three percent or 2.6 million people aged 15 years and over experienced one or more of the cultural activities included in the 2002 Cultural Experiences Survey. The most popular activities (those undertaken in the four weeks before the survey) were purchasing books (43 percent) and visiting a public library (39 percent). Of the less popular activities (those experienced over the past year) the most preferred were visiting an art gallery or museum (48 percent) and attending a popular live music performance (37 percent). A lack of time and cost were the main barriers to experiencing cultural activities more often, or at all.

Figure L3.1 **Proportion of the population aged 15 years and over who experienced cultural activities, by activity type and sex, 2002**



Source: Statistics New Zealand (2002a)

AGE DIFFERENCES

Younger people were more likely to experience at least one of the cultural activities than people in older age groups. In 2002, 98 percent of 15–24 year olds and 96 percent of 25–44 year olds took part in one or more of the surveyed activities. Participation was lowest among people aged 65 years and over (81 percent). Popular activities among younger people included hiring a video or DVD (53 percent) and purchasing music (49 percent). Older people (65 years and over) were more likely to visit a public library than other age groups, with 46 percent reporting this activity.

SEX DIFFERENCES

Women were slightly more likely to experience one or more of the cultural activities included in the survey than men (95 percent compared with 92 percent). More women than men purchased a book, visited a library and went to a theatrical performance. There was no difference in the proportion of men and women who purchased music.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Māori were more likely to have participated in at least one of the cultural activities included in the survey than European or Pacific peoples (Māori 97 percent, European 93 percent, Pacific peoples 92 percent). Popular activities experienced by Māori included visiting a marae (69 percent) and attending a popular live music performance (40 percent). European New Zealanders were more likely to report visiting an art gallery or museum than other groups (51 percent), while Pacific peoples had the highest rate of participation in community-based ethnic or cultural activities (39 percent).

Table L3.1 **Proportion (%) of population aged 15 years and over who had participated in cultural activities, by activity type and ethnic group, 2002**

	Māori	Pacific	European
In the previous 12 months			
Art gallery/museum	42	27	51
Popular live music performance	40	27	39
Theatrical performance	18	19	30
Visited a marae	69	22	14
Ethnic/cultural activities	20	39	14
In the previous four weeks			
Book purchase	40	29	45
Visited public library	34	31	39
Music purchase	32	33	34
Video/DVD hire	39	26	31
Going to movies	23	21	30
Any cultural activity	97	92	93

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2002a)

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

In 2002, 94 percent of people living in urban areas experienced one or more of the cultural activities included in the survey, compared to 93 percent of people living in secondary urban areas and 91 percent of those living in minor urban and rural areas. The Wellington Regional Council area had the highest proportion of people who experienced at least one of the surveyed activities (97 percent), while Taranaki had the lowest level of participation (87 percent).