

MEDIA RELEASE

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Melbourne women missing out on physical activity: survey

Women are missing out on exercise opportunities but are more inclined to want to exercise than men, a new survey shows.

A survey of 1413 Melbourne adults, by VicHealth and Griffith University, reveals differences between the way men and women exercise. It also shows women are getting less exercise in general.

Results from the survey have been released today to coincide with Jean Hailes Women's Health Week, today's theme being 'move' (www.womenshealthweek.com.au).

When it came to the type of exercises the genders prefer, women were more likely than men to take part in yoga (7% vs. 3%) and slightly more likely to go swimming (16% vs. 14%). And men were significantly more likely than women to take part in cycling (19% vs. 11%) and golf (12% vs. 2%).

Women's participation is consistently lower in all age groups after the age of 29.

Overall, men were more likely to say they had been physically active in the previous week at 94 per cent, compared to 92 per cent of women overall, when you include walking. When you exclude walking, 65 per cent of women exercised, compared with 69 per cent of men.

However, the survey shows 34 per cent of women intend to start a new physical activity compared to only 18 per cent of men, with a tendency towards increasing walking, aerobics and yoga.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said women often face more barriers to physical activity, particularly women over 30, mothers and those from non-English speaking backgrounds. Common reasons include difficulty finding the time, a lack of appropriate facilities for women and caring for children.

"Women are finding it increasingly difficult to get involved in exercise at set times of the day or week," Ms Rechter said.

"Modern lifestyles have resulted in many women having to choose between work or family commitments and physical activity. There is little doubt that our increasingly busy and cluttered lifestyles are a factor, which is why we need to rethink how we get our 30-minutes of exercise into our days."

The survey was conducted as part of VicHealth's free TeamUp phone app, (www.teamup.com.au) which was launched in April. The app has since had more than 7800 downloads. It acts as a free community noticeboard where people can list or browse hundreds of activities, from yoga to soccer to roller derby, in their local area, and join in with no commitment.

"TeamUp is specifically designed to clear the hurdles many people, not just women, face when it comes to fitness," Ms Rechter added.

"It's a fun way to get active that caters for all ability levels and best of all, it offers the opportunity to form new social networks and make new friends, which is really important for health as well.

"The way we see it, exercising shouldn't be a chore – it should be the highlight of your day. It's simply about finding what works for you."

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Participation in any physical activity by age and gender

Age/ Gender	18 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 34	35 – 39	40 – 44	45 – 49	50 – 54	55 – 59	60 – 64	65 – 69	70 +	Total
Men	100%	89.5%	91.9%	87.9%	94.1%	95.2%	93.9%	96.0%	96.2%	100%	96.2%	94.4%
Women	100%	91.9%	86.0%	87.5%	88.1%	93.9%	92.0%	94.8%	92.0%	97.1%	85.9%	91.6%
Men (excluding walking)	77.8%	63.2%	54.1%	60.6%	70.6%	78.6%	75.5%	60.0%	71.2%	80.7%	66.0%	69.2%
Women (excluding walking)	45.5%	70.3%	62.0%	53.6%	62.7%	66.7%	68.0%	70.1%	65.9%	64.8%	68.2%	65.3%

Activity participation by gender

Activity	Total participation	Men	Women
Walking	72.1%	72.4%	71.9%
Aerobics	22.1%	20.2%	23.2%
Weight Training	16.0%	17.1%	14.9%
Swimming	15.3%	14.0%	16.1%
Cycling	14.1%	19.4%	10.9%
Running	10.0%	8.9%	10.7%
Golf	5.7%	12.0%	1.9%
Yoga	5.2%	2.7%	6.8%
Tennis	3.1%	4.5%	2.3%
Cricket	1.6%	3.3%	0.5%
Netball	1.1%	0.6%	1.4%
Basketball	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Football (Soccer)	0.8%	1.9%	0.1%
Aust. Rules Football	0.5%	1.2%	0.1%
Other	20.1%	19.4%	20.6%

