



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG ADULTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Regular physical activity produces significant health benefits, and being physically active can help reduce the risk of chronic medical conditions such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, arthritis and some cancers.

Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹ recommend that adults engage in:

- 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity (i.e., running, swimming, walking, bicycling, dancing, and doing jumping jacks), or
- 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate intensity, or
- an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous intensity aerobic activity; the vigorous and moderate activity should be either in a single-session or accumulated in multiple sessions, each lasting at least 10 minutes.
- and muscle-strengthening activities (i.e., doing push-ups, sit-ups, lifting weights and climbing stairs) on 2 or more days a week.

Disparities in Levels of Physical Activity

- The percentage of adults meeting recommended physical activity guidelines has increased from 48% in 2003 to 53% in 2007.
- 36% of adults reported minimal to no activity (“sedentary”).
- Participation in physical activity declines notably with age. Half the population 65+ years is sedentary (50%).
- 52% of adults countywide met the recommended criteria for physical activity. Males were more likely to meet recommended physical activity guidelines (58%) than females (49%).
- The percent meeting physical activity guidelines varied by race/ethnicity (Figure 1).
- Sedentary behavior decreased as levels of income increased. Adults with the lowest incomes are the most physically inactive.
- Sedentary behavior was highest among those with less than a high school education (45%) compared to those with some college (34%) and those with a college or post graduate degree (31%).
- Physical activity levels varied geographically. Residents in the Health Districts of Alhambra, South, Compton, San Antonio, and El Monte reported higher prevalences of sedentary behavior. (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Physical Activity* Among Adults in LA County by Race/Ethnicity, 2007

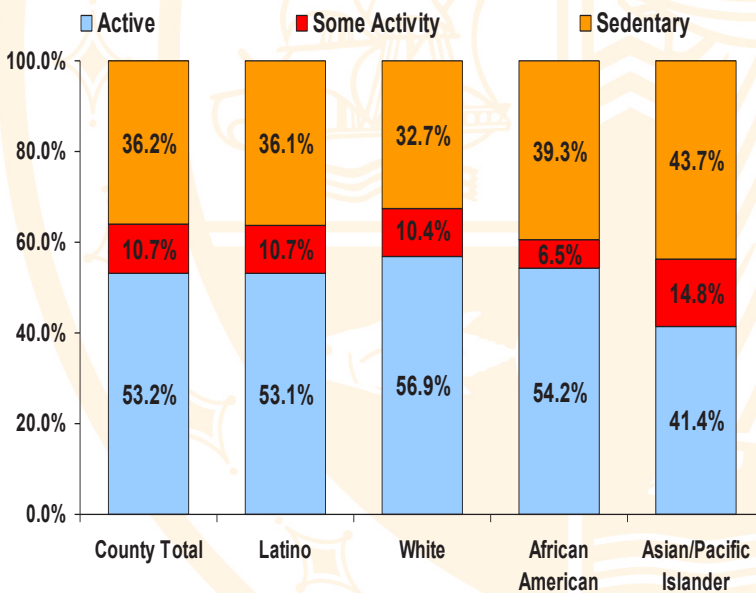
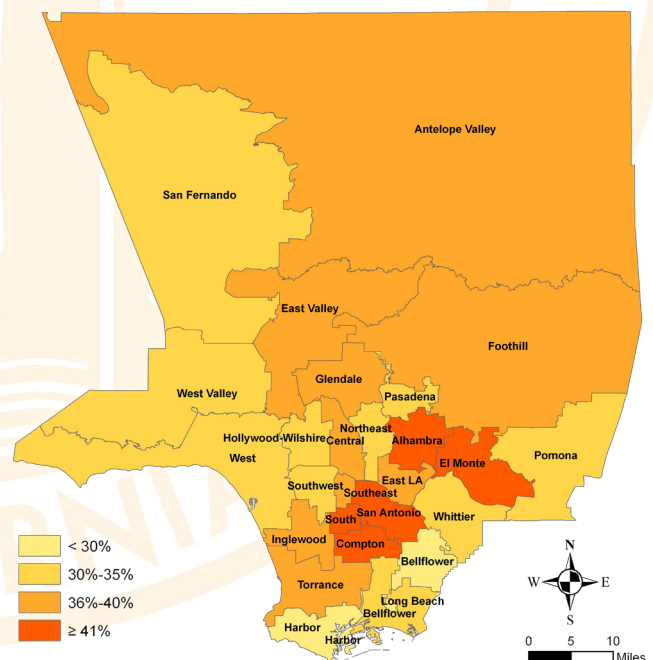


Figure 2: Prevalence of Sedentary Adults by Health District, 2007



* At the time the 2007 LACHS data were collected, to meet recommended guidelines for physical activity, at least one of the following criteria had to be met: (1) Vigorous Activity – hard physical activity causing heavy sweating, large increases in breathing and heart rate for 20+ minutes ≥3 days/wk; (2) Moderate Activity – light sweating, slight increases in breathing and heart rate for 30+ minutes ≥5 days/wk; or (3) a combination of vigorous and moderate activity meeting the time criteria for ≥5 days/wk. Active=Meets Guidelines; Some Activity=Does Not Meet Guidelines; Minimal to No Activity=Sedentary.

¹ <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.aspx>