

DSR's contribution to unstructured activities includes:

- Organisational development (recreation peak bodies)
- Participation events (come and try days, fun runs)
- Activity coordination, e.g. walk leaders/infrastructure (public open space)
- Development of industry standards (e.g. Fitness Code of Practice)
- Leader training and accreditation/registration

Background

Recent research¹ in Western Australia indicates that the majority (55 per cent) of Western Australians participate in sufficient physical activity to meet the national standard; therefore there are 45 per cent of residents who fail to meet this criterion. A small proportion (10 per cent) of Western Australians who have no intention of doing any physical activity will miss out on the health benefits of being physically active.²

From the findings of the 1999 and 2002 Western Australian physical activity surveys^{3,4} it is demonstrated that the proportion of adults reporting sufficient levels of physical activity decreased with age, consistent with other state and national surveys. This trend is having a significant impact upon the health of the nation and the cost of this in terms of disease related to the lack of physical activity.

ABS figures indicate that 74.9 per cent (76.9 per cent men and 73 per cent women) of Western Australians participate in sport and physical activities, compared to a national figure of 54.7 per cent⁵ but when frequency of involvement is considered, there are still not enough people meeting recommended requirements.

In Western Australia men (57 per cent) are somewhat more active than women (52 per cent) and those under 30 (68 per cent) are more active than each older age groups⁶. Time is identified as the major constraint for not participating in physical activity and those with a tertiary education and in managerial/professional work are more active than those people in other employment groups.

Individuals can gain health benefits from participation in regular moderate physical activity in a 30-minute session on most days of the week. While 82 per cent of people men participate in physical activity only 48.5 per cent of women and 43 per cent of men participate three times or more per week.⁷

¹ McCormack, G., Milligan, R., Giles-Corti, B., and Clarkson, J.P. (2003). *Physical activity levels of Western Australian adults 2002: Results from the adult physical activity survey and pedometer study*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government²⁵.

² McCormack op. cit. p48.

³ Bull, F., Milligan, R., Rosenberg, M., and MacGowan, H. (2000). *Physical activity levels of Western Australian adults 1999*. Perth, Western Australia: Health Department of Western Australia and Sport and Recreation WAY2Go, p23

⁴ McCormack op. cit. p24.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2004). *Participation in sport and physical activities (No. 4177.0)*. Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Authorp12.

⁶ McCormack op. cit. p25

⁷ Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport.(2003).Participation in exercise recreation and sport: Annual report . p15

DSR works actively with the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) to raise awareness about falling participation rates and increasing obesity and pursuing programs to reverse trends. The Director General is Deputy Chair of the PATF and other staff contribute through working groups: Communications; Local Government; and Evaluation and Monitoring.

Definitions

Moderate intensity physical activity causes some increase in breathing and heart rate as a consequence of the activity. It may also cause some sweating in some individuals.

Vigorous activity results in some "huffing and puffing" and should be done 3-4 times a week for 30-minutes on each occasion. It should be in addition to all other physical activity.

Physical activity involves some significant movement of the body.

Exercise is activity that is usually planned, structured and repetitive and aimed at improving fitness.

Contacts

Tricia Summerfield
Senior Policy Officer

(08) 9492 9831

tricia.summerfield@dsr.wa.gov.au

Resources

McCormack, G., Milligan, R., Giles-Corti, B., and Clarkson, J.P. (2003). *Physical activity levels of Western Australian adults 2002: Results from the adult physical activity survey and pedometer study*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.

Physical Activity Taskforce (2004). *Child and adolescent physical activity and nutrition survey 2003 (CAPANS): A preliminary report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.

Useful Websites

The Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce

<http://www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au/>

National Physical Activity Guidelines

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/phd-physical-activity-adults-pdf-cnt.htm>