

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 as families do things together in their leisure time.

INDICATORS

Three indicators are used in this chapter. They are: satisfaction with leisure time, participation in sport and active leisure 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 sport and active leisure. Moderate physical activity can improve a number of health outcomes, risk factors and diseases. This indicator gives us a sense of how active New Zealanders are.

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 in New Zealand’s Largest Cities Survey 2004*.

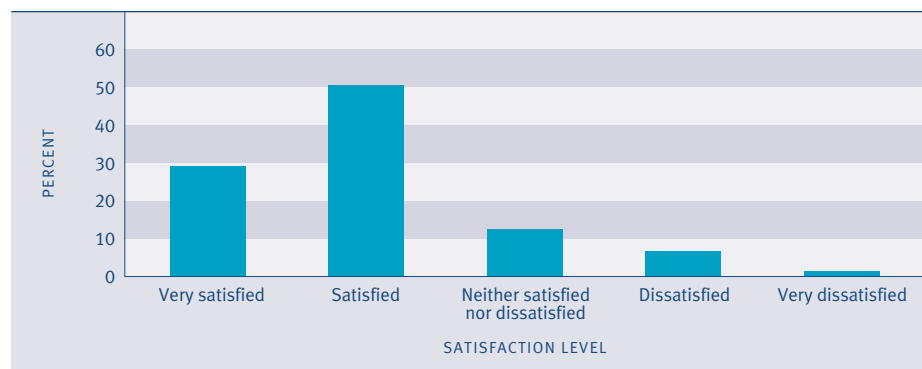
RELEVANCE

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 in New Zealand’s Largest Cities Survey 2004*, four in five New Zealanders (80 percent) were satisfied overall with their leisure time. Of these, 51 percent were “satisfied” and 29 percent were “very satisfied”.

Figure L1.1 **Satisfaction with leisure time, people aged 15 years and over, 2004**

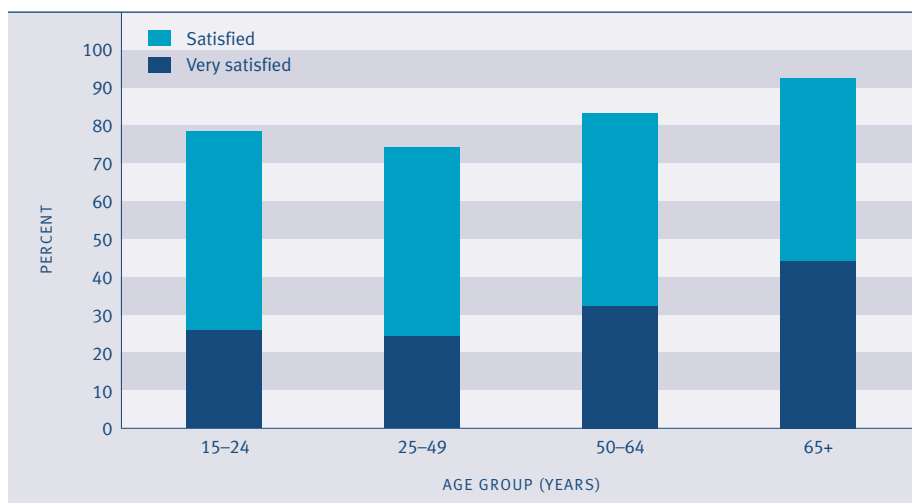


Source: Auckland City Council et al (2005) *Quality of Life in New Zealand’s Largest Cities Survey 2004*

AGE DIFFERENCES

While the majority of New Zealanders were satisfied with their leisure time, those aged 25–49 years were less satisfied overall (74 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 78 percent and 83 percent respectively. People aged 65 years and over reported the highest levels of overall satisfaction with their leisure time (92 percent).

Figure L1.2 Satisfaction with leisure time, by age, 2004



Source: Auckland City Council et al (2005) Quality of Life in New Zealand's Largest Cities Survey 2004

SEX DIFFERENCES

There was only a small difference between the sexes in reported satisfaction with leisure time. Eighty percent of men and 79 percent of women reported they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their leisure time.

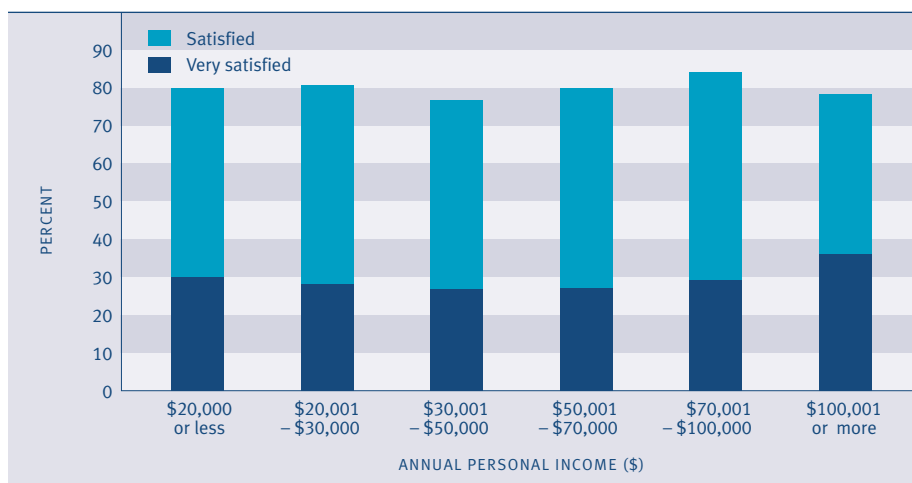
ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Most New Zealanders, regardless of their ethnicity, were satisfied with their leisure time. The European ethnic group reported the highest level of total satisfaction (81 percent), followed by Māori and those of Other (excluding Asian) ethnicities (both 77 percent), and Pacific peoples (73 percent). The Asian ethnic group reported the lowest level of satisfaction (71 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 2004, satisfaction with leisure time was highest for people with a personal income between \$70,001 and \$100,000 per year, with 84 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 of between \$30,001 and \$50,000 (76 percent), and those with an income over \$100,000 (78 percent).

Figure L1.3 Satisfaction with leisure time, by personal income, 2004



Source: Auckland City Council et al (2005) Quality of Life in New Zealand's Largest Cities Survey 2004

Participation in sport and active leisure

DEFINITION

The proportion of adults aged 15 years and over who were physically active, as measured by the Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) Continuous Monitoring Survey 2005.

Being physically 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.

RELEVANCE

Participation in sport and active leisure 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-one percent of adults aged 15 years and over were reported to be physically active in 2005 and nearly half (47 percent) of these were highly active. Highly active means doing some vigorous physical activity during the week, in addition to the requirements for being rated as physically active.

Table L2.1 **Activity level (%) of adults, by sex, 2005**

Activity level	Adults 15 years and over		
	Males	Females	All
Sedentary	4	7	5
Insufficiently active	19	24	22
Sufficiently active	19	28	24
Highly active	56	38	47
Don't know	2	3	2
Active	75	66	71
Inactive	23	31	27

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2006)

AGE DIFFERENCES

In 2005, activity levels declined with age. The most active age group was 15–24 year olds (78 percent) and the least active was the 65 years and over group (55 percent). The rates for the 25–34 years, 35–49 years and 50–64 years age groups were 75 percent, 73 percent and 70 percent respectively.

SEX DIFFERENCES

Men were more likely than women to be physically active in 2005. Three-quarters of men did at least 2.5 hours of activity and five or more sessions per week, compared to two-thirds of women. Men were also much more likely to be highly active, with 56 percent in this category compared with 38 percent of women.

ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

There was little difference in the activity levels of three of the four main ethnic groups. Māori adults had an activity level of 74 percent, Europeans 72 percent and Pacific peoples 71 percent. The activity level of the Other ethnic group was 67 percent.

Table L2.2 **Activity level (%) of adults, by ethnicity, 2005**

	European	Māori	Pacific	Other
Sedentary	6	6	5	5
Insufficiently active	21	19	19	27
Sufficiently active	25	20	16	26
Highly active	47	54	55	41
Don't know	1	1	5	1
Active	72	74	71	67
Inactive	27	25	24	32

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2006)

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 (64 percent). People in income groups above \$30,000 had activity levels about 10 percentage points higher than this. People in the two top income groups (above \$50,000) were more likely to be highly active than those in the lower income groups.

Table L2.3 **Activity level (%) of adults, by adjusted household income, 2005**

	\$20,000 or less	\$20,001 –\$30,000	\$30,001 –\$50,000	\$50,001 –\$70,000	\$70,001 or more
Sedentary	8	4	5	5	5
Insufficiently active	26	25	20	21	20
Sufficiently active	27	26	27	20	22
Highly active	37	44	47	53	52
Don't know	2	1	1	1	1
Active	64	70	74	73	74
Inactive	34	29	25	26	25

Source: Sport and Recreation New Zealand (2006)

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Activity levels were lower in the seven local authorities in the Auckland area (67 percent) than in the rest of New Zealand (72 percent). There was little variation in activity levels between the broad regions outside Auckland – north and central New Zealand and the South Island.

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).

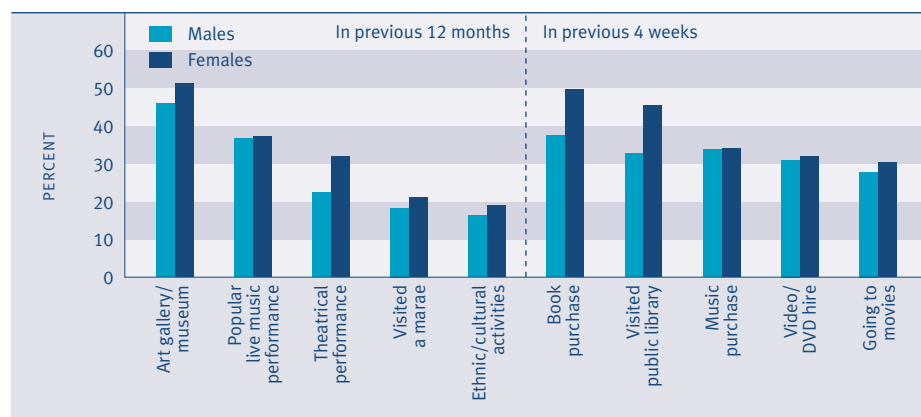
RELEVANCE

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 had 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).