

GETTING FIT: ONE IN FIVE CANADIANS REPORT BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH WITH MOST ATTRIBUTING PROBLEMS TO LESS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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INTRODUCTION: NEARLY ONE IN FIVE CANADIANS REPORT BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH SINCE COVID-19

While there has legitimately been much attention directed at the mental health challenges owing to the social and economic circumstances to which COVID-19 has given rise, policy-makers should not neglect the impact of the contagion on the state of Canadians' physical health. Over the past two months nearly one in five Canadians surveyed by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies report that since the start of the COVID-19 crisis their physical health has been bad.

When asked to further elaborate on this in terms how their health has been affected most report not being fit as a result of less exercise, activity and not going out. Our public authorities will need to encourage Canadians to be active which may be an important element in the battle to address mental health concerns as the Leger-ACS survey shows a very strong correlation between sound physical and mental health. The survey was conducted via web panel from May 21 to May 23, 2021 some 1532 Canadians

Using data from the 2016 Census, results were weighted according to gender, age, mother tongue, region, education level and presence of children in the household in order to ensure a representative sample of the population.

No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (Web panel in this case). However for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1532 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.52\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The research results presented here are in full compliance with the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements.

YOUNGEST COHORT MOST LIKELY TO REPORT BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your physical health? May 21-23, 2021	
Physical Health	Bad
Total	18%
Men	17%
Women	19%
18-34	25%
35-54	19%
55 plus	11%
Atlantic	14%
Quebec	20%
Ontario	20%
MB/Sask	16%
Alberta	15%
BC	14%

OF THOSE REPORTING BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH SAY THE MAIN AFFECT HAS BEEN LESS EXERCISE/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, WEIGHT GAIN AND LESS ACTIVITY

Please tell us in one sentence how specifically your physical health has been affected?

	Top ten
Less exercise/physical activities	36%
I gained weight	17%
Less going out / staying inside more	16%
More screen time / more sedentary	11%
Muscle pain / inflammation / mobility issues	6%
Stress eating	6%
Less activity	6%

YOUNGEST COHORT REPORTING BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH FAR MORE LIKELY TO DESCRIBE LESS/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS PRINCIPAL AFFECT

Please tell us in one sentence how specifically your physical health has been affected?							
	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
Less exercise/physical activities	36%	48%	43%	35%	26%	34%	18%
I gained weight	17%	14%	22%	16%	19%	20%	4%
Less going out / staying inside more	16%	19%	20%	10%	15%	18%	8%
More screen time / more sedentary	11%	17%	18%	8%	7%	4%	6%
Health issues / bad health (unspecified)	7%	10%	4%	7%	8%	12%	0%
Muscle pain / inflammation / mobility issues	6%	3%	4%	4%	7%	16%	3%
Stress eating	6%	8%	9%	5%	8%	5%	0%

PEOPLE THAT REPORT BAD PHYSICAL HEALTH REPORT VERY HIGH RATES BAD MENTAL HEALTH

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your physical health?					Total
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad	
Excellent	57.1%	12.9%	4.4%	3.1%		11.0%
Very positive	17.0%	41.4%	9.2%	3.5%	7.1%	16.8%
Positive	19.7%	34.8%	54.7%	36.5%	14.3%	43.1%
Bad	5.4%	9.3%	22.3%	43.8%	42.9%	21.4%
Very bad	0.7%	0.8%	4.0%	10.0%	35.7%	4.4%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer		0.8%	5.4%	3.1%		3.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MANY PERSONS REPORTING ANXIETY AND STRESS SAY THEIR DEGREE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Please tell us in one sentence how specifically your physical health has been affected?	Please tell us in one sentence how specifically your mental health has been affected?		
	Depression (20)	Anxiety / stress (36)	Isolation / loneliness (17)
Less exercise/physical activities	15.0%	30.6%	23.5%
I gained weight	15.0%	8.3%	5.9%
Less going out / staying inside more	20.0%	13.9%	35.3%
Health issues / bad health (unspecified)	15.0%	2.8%	
Stress eating		13.9%	5.9%

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