

In California, 2 in 3 kids fail to meet exercise standards, according to study

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California's weather encourages year-round outdoor activity. Yet just 1 in 3 children and only 1 in 5 teens in the state exercise for the one hour per day that's recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, according to a study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

In contrast, a greater percentage of California [adults](#) are walking regularly. A related report by the center found that 4 in 5 adults walk for transportation (to reach work, for example), for leisure or both – an increase from 3 in 4 a decade earlier. In fairness to children, though, the study's authors estimate that just 1 in 3 adults are meeting meet the CDC-recommended goal of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise.

"It's encouraging that adults showed improvement, but a lot of Californians still need to move more," said Susan Babey, co-director of the center's Chronic Disease Program and lead author of both studies. "Regardless of age, exercising helps people stay in better physical and mental shape."

Both studies are based on the 2013–14 California Health Interview Survey of more than 40,000 households in the state, and the adult study also compared results to the 2003 version of the same survey.

The main findings from the study of children and teens:

- An estimated 38 percent of young children (5 to 7 years old) meet the recommended daily physical activity level, but the proportion drops to 25 percent for 8- to 11-year olds, and to just 18 percent for 12- to 17-year-olds.
- Boys are significantly more likely to meet the physical activity goal than girls, except among the youngest age group.
- Half of white children exercise for an hour daily, a slightly higher percentage than among black and American Indian/Alaska native children. Rates for Asian-American and Latino children were lower, at 41 percent and 36 percent, respectively.

- Overall, roughly 1 in 10 children and teens never get an hour of physical exercise on any given day.
- Forty-four percent of children and teens who live within walking distance of a park meet their recommended physical activity goals, versus just 36 percent of those who do not live near a park.

The key findings from the adult study:

- Half of adults walk for transportation, but 65 percent walk for leisure.
- A higher proportion of men (53 percent) than women (47 percent) walk for transportation. But a higher proportion of women (67 percent) walk for leisure compared to men (62 percent).
- Adults from all racial groups have higher rates of walking for leisure than transportation, but non-white adults are more likely to walk for transportation than whites. In addition, low-income earners are more likely to walk for transportation than people with higher incomes.
- Adults who said they feel safe in their neighborhood all of the time walk for leisure for an hour and a half per week; those who said they never feel safe walk for about an hour per week.
- Adults who live in an area where they know and trust their neighbors walk for 101 minutes per week, while those who live in neighborhoods with less social cohesion walk for 74 minutes per week.

The study's authors recommend that governments and community leaders advance policies and programs that would support more walking among adults and encourage [physical activity](#) among [children](#) and adolescents by adding more parks, developing neighborhood crime prevention programs and promoting social cohesion in neighborhoods.

More information: Susan H. Babbey et al. Few California Children and Adolescents Meet Physical Activity Guidelines.

[healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publicat ... tail.aspx?PubID=1776](https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/tail.aspx?PubID=1776)

Susan H. Babbey et al. Walking Among California Adults.

[healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publicat ... tail.aspx?PubID=1775](https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/tail.aspx?PubID=1775)

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