

# Men and younger adults less active in lockdown

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New research published in the journal *BMJ Open Sport and Exercise Medicine* indicates that men and younger adults have been less physically active during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The study, led by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and Ulster

University, includes data from 911 UK adults who took part in an [online survey](#) which began on 17 March.

The research found that 75% of UK adults met the World Health Organisation's physical activity recommendations of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week, since the introduction of social distancing regulations.

This is higher than previous studies carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic, which found that between 58% and 66% of the UK adult population typically meet physical activity guidelines

The new study found that women, [older adults](#), and those with a higher annual household income were significantly more likely to meet the WHO's physical activity guidelines. This is the opposite of studies carried out prior to the pandemic, where men and younger adults were found to have higher levels of physical activity.

Lead author Dr. Lee Smith, Reader in Physical Activity and Public Health at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said: "The overall levels of physical activity are higher than we were expecting.

"It may be that the UK public have experienced an increase in free time and used this time to be physically active. Additionally, during the early stages of the outbreak, one of the few reasons to leave home was to take part in an hour of exercise. As well as offering a reason to go outside, this may have served as a target for some people.

"Typically, the proportion of UK adults meeting physical activity guidelines declines with age. Therefore, there should be additional support offered to older adults to encourage them to sustain this level of physical activity post pandemic."

**More information:** Lee Smith et al, Prevalence and correlates of physical activity in a sample of UK adults observing social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjsem-2020-000850](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2020-000850)

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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