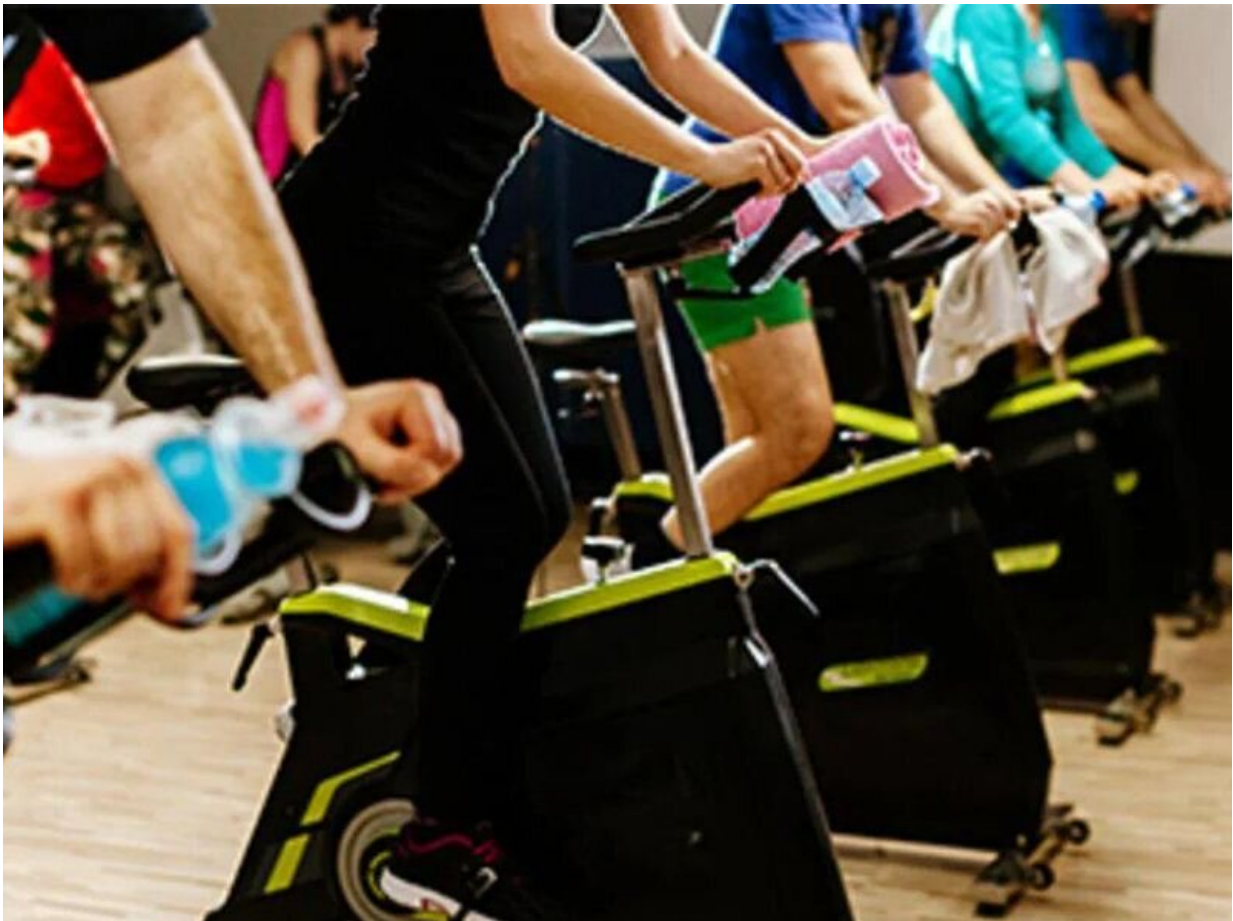


About 25% of Americans gained better habits during pandemic, poll finds

March 9 2022



About one-quarter of Americans say they made positive changes to their

daily habits during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new poll shows.

As U.S. states ended masking mandates and infection numbers dropped this year, most (64%) respondents said [their mood](#) had been stable since January and that the pandemic either hadn't affected their daily habits (49%) or had changed them for the better (26%).

But 28% said their mental health was fair or poor, 17% said they were smoking more, and 18% said they were drinking more, according to the latest American Psychiatric Association (APA) monthly survey of 2,500 adults, conducted Feb. 18-19, 2022.

"While many Americans seem to have emerged from the pandemic feeling good about their new habits, there are some points of concern here, such as those who've started using substances more than before," said Dr. Vivian Pender, president of the APA.

She also cited the need to keep an eye on financial concerns.

Respondents making less than \$50,000 a year (35%) were 7% more likely than all adults to rate their [mental health](#) as fair or poor. They were more than three times as likely to do so as respondents making \$100,000 or more (11%).

"People's finances can matter to mental health, which is important to monitor while the nation's economy is in flux," Pender said in an APA news release.

Fathers (37%) were nearly two times more likely than mothers (19%) and all adults (18%) to say their mood had changed for the better in the past month. Dads were also much more likely (45%) than moms (29%) and all adults (26%) to say time at home had changed their daily habits for the better.

The survey also found differences between racial/[ethnic groups](#), with 20% of Hispanic adults saying their mood was worse in February than in January, compared to 15% of all adults.

But 32% of Hispanic adults and 36% of Black adults said their daily habits improved during the [pandemic](#), compared with 24% of adults of other ethnicities.

Respondents who said they felt better than in January attributed the improvement to generally feeling good (45%) and the weather (27%). Those who felt worse cited finances (20%), inflation (10%), financial stress (10%), money (10%) and COVID-19 (20%).

Men were more likely than women to say they had increased the amount they exercise, shower, drink alcohol, and smoke or use drugs. Hispanic adults (36%) and Black adults (33%) were more likely than those of other ethnicities (27%) to report an increase in how much they talk about their mental health.

About a third of adults (35%) said they often wonder if their habits might be related to a more significant [mental health](#) issue (such as [obsessive-compulsive disorder](#), anxiety or [substance use disorder](#)). That concern was higher among Hispanic respondents (46%) than among white adults (34%), Black adults (40%), or people of another ethnicity (36%).

More information: For more on COVID-19 and mental health, see the nonprofit [Mental Health America](#).

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Citation: About 25% of Americans gained better habits during pandemic, poll finds (2022,

March 9) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-03-americans-gained-habits-pandemic-poll.html>

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