

Texas Department of Health

Physical Activity Among Texans 1998 Survey Data

Introduction

Regular physical activity provides short-term benefits and reduces long-term risk for disability and premature death.¹ A number of epidemiological studies have demonstrated that people who are more physically active live longer.² Regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of heart disease, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Regular physical activity also helps to control weight; maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and improves mood.³

Despite these benefits, most people in the United States lead a sedentary lifestyle. Approximately 15 percent of U.S. adults engage regularly (3 times a week for at least 20 minutes each) in vigorous physical activity during leisure time.³ Twenty-two percent of adults engage regularly (5 times a week for at least 30 minutes each) in sustained intensive physical activity during leisure time as recommended in the 1996 Surgeon General's report.³ About 25 percent of adults reported participating in no leisure time physical activity at all.

More than two-thirds (69%) of adult Texans reported that they did not get at least 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity at least three times a week.

This report is a follow-up to the *Chronic Disease Community and Worksite Wellness Report: 1998 Texas Physical Activity Survey* (TDH website: www.tdh.state.tx.us/wellness/topten.htm) regarding the prevalence of physical activity among adult Texans as profiled by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Methods

Data were collected using a BRFSS-like survey from September to November in 1998. This was a point-in-time survey that randomly selected Texans 18 years of age or older. Ninety standard questions about tobacco use and physical activity were used. Respondents were asked about the frequency, duration, and intensity of their leisure time and work time physical activities during the preceding months. The survey results were categorized as follows:

Highlights of this Issue

- **More than two-thirds (69%) of adult Texans are not getting the amount of physical activity recommended for greater health benefits.**
- **Forty-two percent of adult Texans reported the main personal reason they are not more physically active is that they believe they are already getting enough physical activity.**
- **Fifty-one percent of adult Texans who believe they are already getting enough physical activity are not getting the amount of physical activity recommended for greater health benefits.**
- **Twenty-nine percent of adult Texans reported the main personal reason they are not more physically active to be the lack of time for physical activity.**
- **Thirty-seven percent of adult Texans reported the leading community reason for not being more physically active to be the lack of enough fitness facilities, sidewalks, and organized programs.**

1) How much physical activity does a person need to confer health benefits?: (less than 30 minutes for most days of a week, at least 20 minutes 3 times per week, or no amount of physical activity);

2) What is the main personal reason for not being more physically active?: (don't have enough time, too tired, have a health condition, don't like physical activity, don't have anyone with whom to do physical activity, afraid of injury, or have enough physical activity);

3) Which is the main community-related reason not more physically active?: (not enough facilities, not enough sidewalks, no organized programs, unsafe because of crime, unsafe because of dogs or other animals, or some other reasons);

4) How many days did you spend on moderate activities in leisure time to increase breathing or heart rate?: (0 days to seven days);

5) How long did you maintain moderate activities?: (less than 10 minutes, 10 to 20 minutes, or more than 20 minutes);

6) Describe future physical activity plan: (increase, maintain, or reduce);

7) Describe your activity at work: (mostly sitting and standing with limited walking; mostly standing, walking or moderate activity; and mostly heavy lifting);

8) Describe physical activity during lunch or breaks: (no physical activity, 5 to 10 minutes, 10 to 20 minutes, 30 minutes more, or don't have breaks);

9) Main reason for not being physically active during lunch or break time: (must remain at desk, eating, break too short, not allowed, no place, or resting);

10) Are incentives (see Figure 10) provided at the workplace to encourage physical activity: (yes or no).

11) Sedentary lifestyle, which is defined as leisure-time physical activity less than 20 minutes per day and less than 5 days per week: (not at risk, at risk).

BRFSS used the method of a truncated list-assisted sample, which is a special type of cluster sampling. Statistical analyses were performed using SUDAAN. Data were weighted to reflect the age, sex, and race distribution in Texas as well as the probability of being selected in the survey. Level of physical activity was determined by self-reported frequency, duration, and intensity of physical activities.

Survey Results

A total of 2,750 Texas adults 18 years of age or older were interviewed. The average age of the respondents was 43 years with a range of 18 to 94 years of age.

The demographics of the people surveyed are summarized in Table 1.

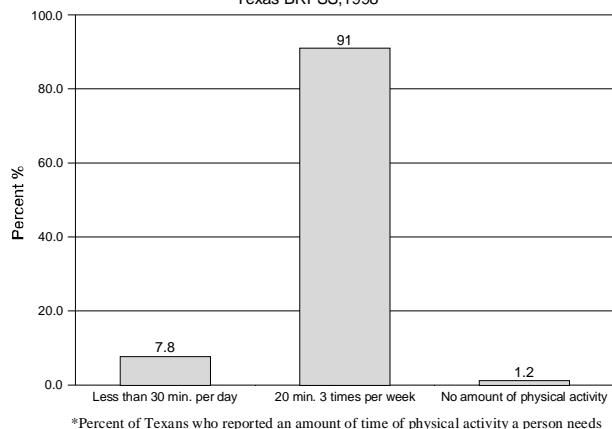
Table 1. Demographics, education, and income of adult Texans aged 18 years or older surveyed in 1998

Sample	N=2,750	%	95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Age Group				
18-14		13.9	12.1	15.6
25-34		21.9	20.2	23.7
35-44		22.9	21.2	24.7
45-54		16.9	15.4	18.4
55-64		10.4	9.1	11.6
65+		14.0	12.5	15.5
Race/Ethnicity				
White		62.9	60.8	65.1
Black		7.2	6.1	8.2
Hispanic		26.1	24.1	28.1
Other		3.9	3.1	4.7
Education Group				
Never attended school		0.7	0.2	1.2
Grade 1 - 8		7.1	5.9	8.3
Grade 9 - 11		10.1	7.4	12.2
Grade 12 or GED		27.7	25.8	29.6
College 1 - 3		27.8	25.9	29.8
College 4 or more years		26.5	19.3	24.8
Income				
<\$10K		5.8	4.7	6.9
\$10k - \$15k		5.8	4.7	6.8
\$15k - \$20k		7.4	6.2	8.6
\$20k - \$25k		12.9	11.4	14.4
\$25k - \$35k		15.6	14.0	17.3
\$35k - \$50k		18.4	16.6	20.1
\$50k - \$75k		18.1	16.4	19.9
>=\$75k		15.9	13.3	18.2

How much physical activity a person needs to avoid disease:

Ninety-one percent of respondents reported that, to avoid disease, a person needs twenty minutes of physical activity three times a week; eight percent said less than 30 minutes on most days of the week; and one percent reported no amount of physical activity (Figure 1).

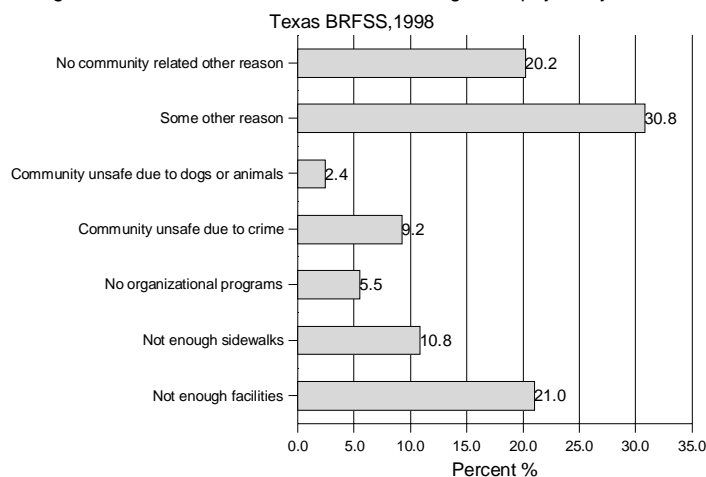
Fig 1. Time and frequency - Physical activity a person needs to avoid disease*
Texas BRFSS, 1998



Main community reason for not being more physically active:

Thirty-eight percent of adult Texans reported that the leading community reason for not being more physically active was lack of enough fitness facilities, sidewalks, and organized programs. Twelve percent reported it was unsafe because of crime and dogs or other animals, and 51 percent reported other reasons for not being physical active (Figure 3).

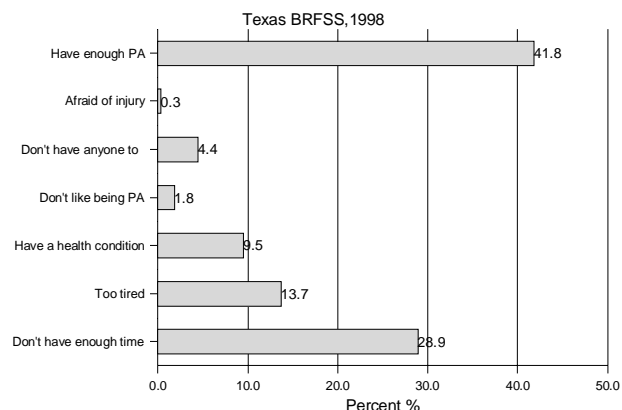
Fig 3. Main COMMUNITY reason for not being more physically active



Main personal reason for not being more physically active:

Figure 2 shows that 42 percent of adult Texans believe that they are already getting enough physical activity; 29 percent said that they don't have enough time; 14 percent said that they are too tired to do physical activity; 10 percent said they have a health condition; less than two percent said they don't like it; and four percent reported that they don't have anyone with whom to be active; and less than one percent said that they were afraid of injury.

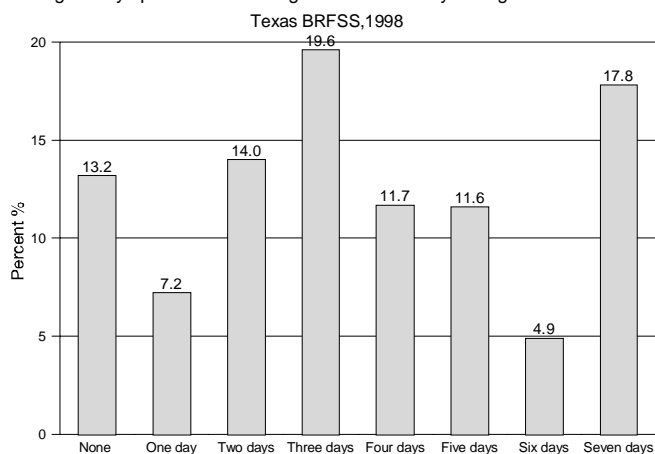
Fig 2. Main PERSONAL reason for not being more physically active



Leisure time physical activity:

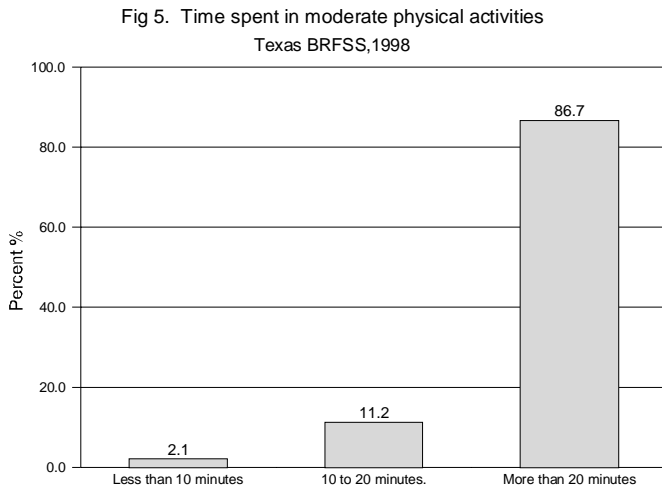
About 20 percent of adult Texans reported that they are physically active three days per week; 18 percent reported seven days; about 14 percent reported two days; 11 percent reported that they are physically active for four to five days per week; seven percent reported one day per week, and 13 percent said that they were not physically active at all (Figure 4).

Fig 4. Days per week for doing moderate activity during leisure time



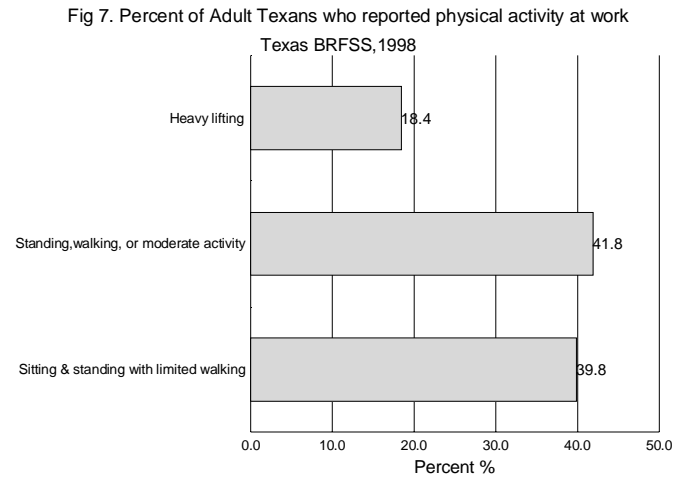
Time spent in moderate physical activities:

Figure 5 shows that 87 percent of adult Texans reported that, when they take part in physical activities, they continue for 20 minutes or more; 11 percent reported 10 to 20 minutes; and two percent reported less than 10 minutes.



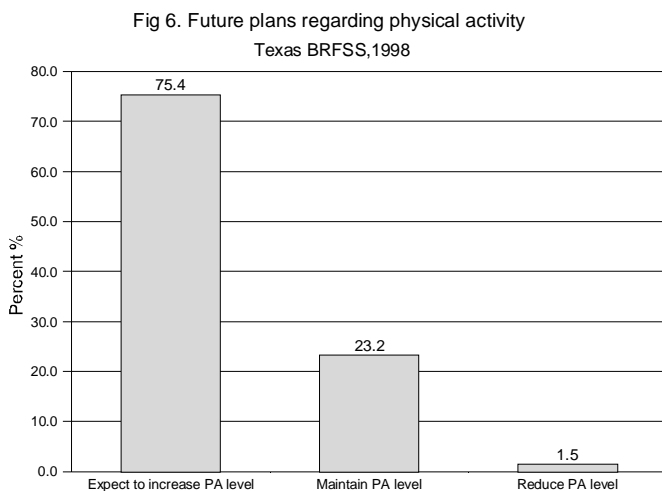
Physical activity at work:

Forty percent of adult Texans reported that they mostly sit and stand with limited walking at their work; 42 percent stand, walk or perform moderate physical activity; and 18 percent reported performing heavy lifting work (Figure 7).



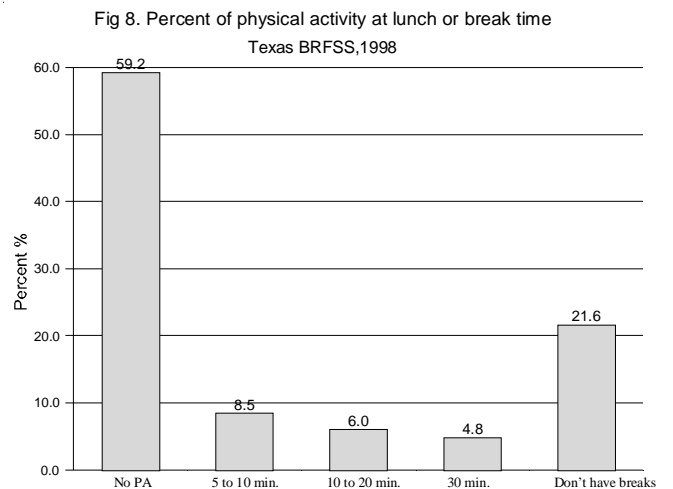
Future plans regarding physical activity:

Three-quarters, or 75.4 percent, of adult Texans expect to increase their physical activity level; 23 percent expect to maintain their physical activities; and less than two percent expect to reduce their physical activities (Figure 6).



Physical activity at lunch or break:

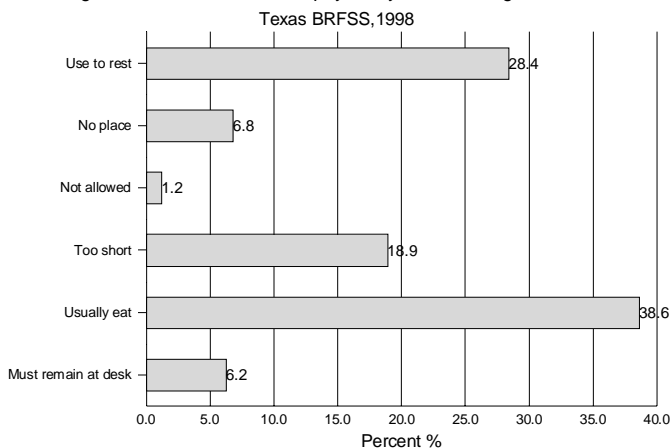
About 60 percent of respondents reported that they are not physically active during lunch time; 22 percent reported that they do not have breaks; and about 10 percent reported that they walk or perform physical activity (Figure 8).



Main reason not more physically active at lunch or break time:

Six percent of adult Texans reported that they have to remain at their desk; 40 percent reported that they usually eat during break time; 20 percent said that the break time is too short; less than 2 percent reported that they were not allowed to do physical activity; 7 percent reported that they have no place to perform physical activity; and 30 percent said they use break time for rest (Figure 9).

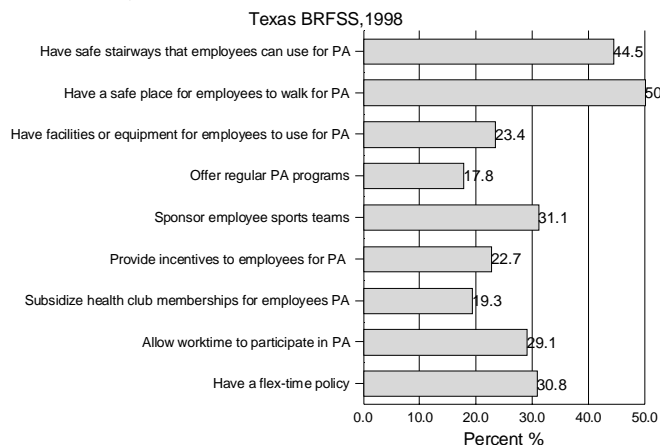
Fig 9. Main reason not more physically active during break time



Physical activity at the workplace:

About 31 percent of adult Texans reported that they want to engage in more physical activity in the next six months; about 30 percent reported that their workplaces have a flex-time policy and allow work time to participate in physical activity; 19.3 percent reported that their workplace subsidizes health club memberships for their employees; 22.7 percent reported that their workplace provides incentives to do physical activity during the workday; 31.1 percent reported that their workplace sponsors employee sports teams; 17.8 percent report that their workplace offers regular physical activity programs; 23.4 percent reported that the workplace has facilities or equipment for employees to use for physical activity programs; 50 percent of adult Texans responded that they have a safe place to walk; and 44.5 percent reported having a safe stairway to walk for physical activity at the workplace (Figure 10 and Table 2).

Fig 10. Percent of Adult physical activity at workplace



Sedentary lifestyle:

Figure 11 shows that 69 percent of adult Texans are not getting the amount of physical activity needed for greater health benefits.

Fig 11. Percent of Adult Texans with sedentary lifestyle

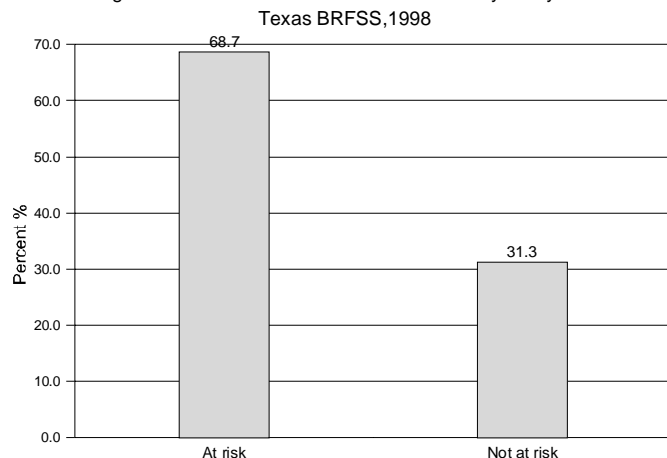


Figure 11.1 shows that 67 percent of males and 71 percent of females are not getting the amount of physical activity needed for greater health benefits.

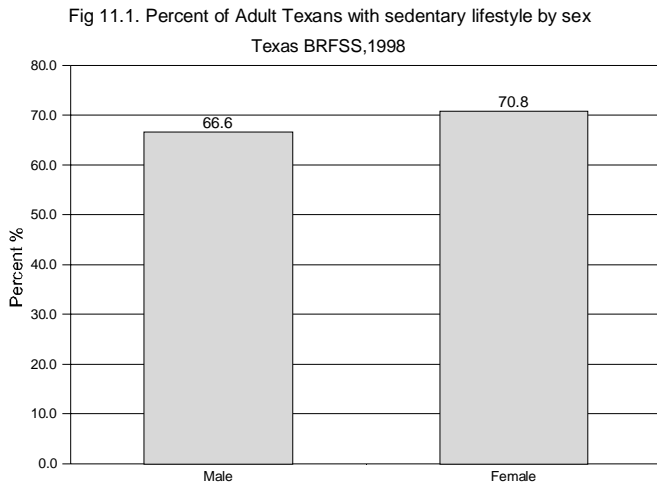


Figure 11.2 shows that 65 percent of white, 77 percent of black, 74 percent of Hispanic, and 76 percent of other race groups are not getting the amount of physical activity needed for greater health benefits.

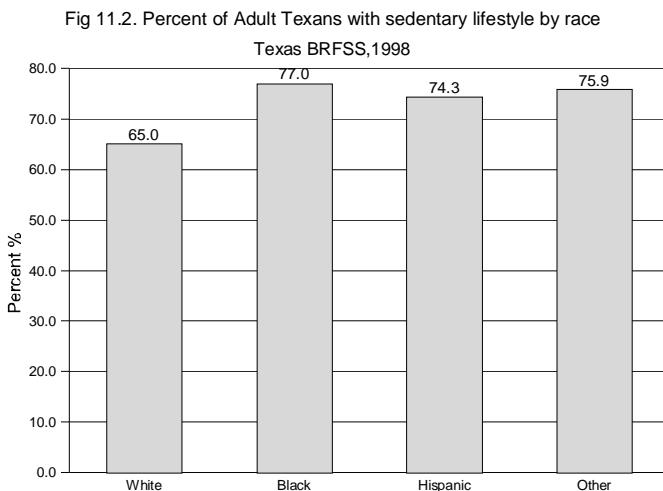


Figure 11.3 shows sedentary lifestyle risk by age. Seventy-one percent of respondents aged 18-44 years are not getting moderate activity for 20 minutes per day and 5 to 7 days per week. Sixty-nine percent of those aged 45-64, and 62 percent of those aged 65 years or older reported that they did not do physical activity more than 20 minutes per day for 5 to 7 days per week. The difference was not statistically significant.

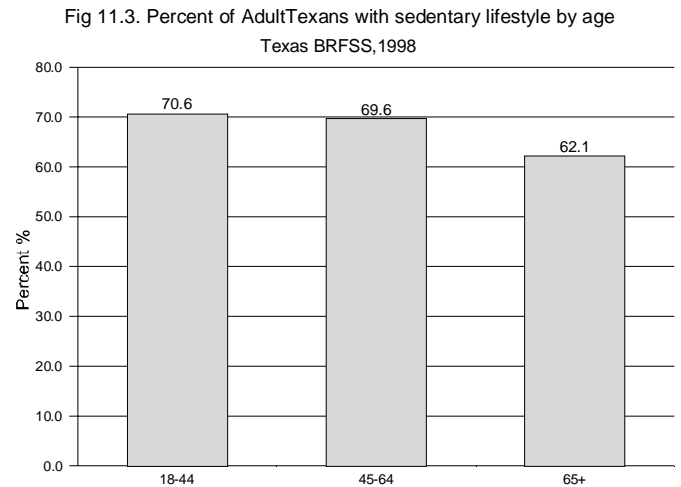


Figure 11.4 shows that respondents with lower education (never attended school) had a sedentary lifestyle prevalence of 79.4 percent while those with 4 or more years of college had a prevalence of 67.7 percent. This difference was not statistically significant

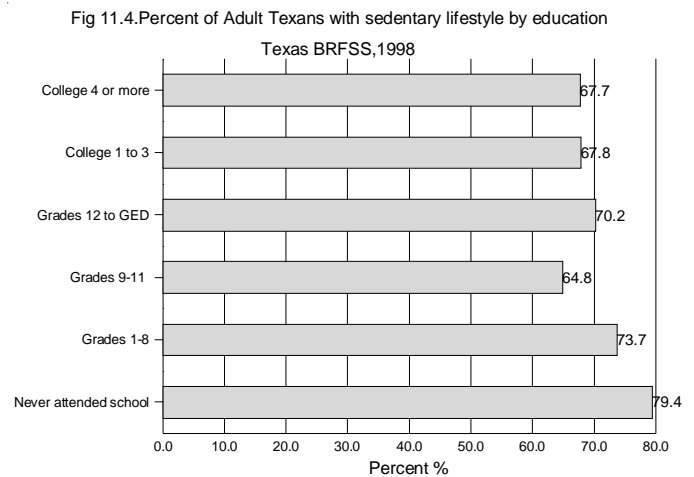
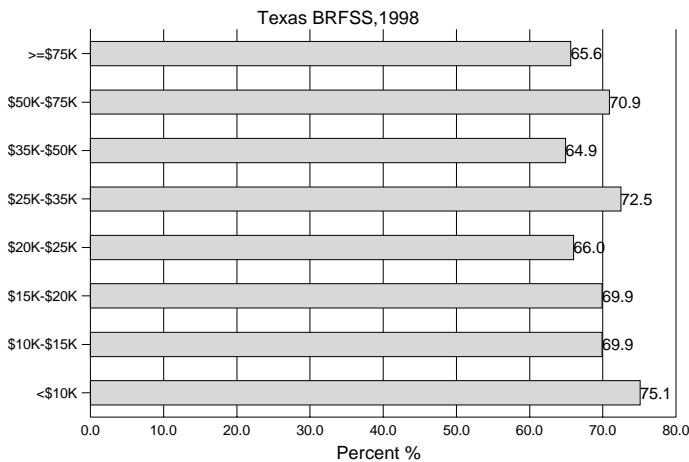


Figure 11.5 shows that Texans earning less than \$10,000 per year had a higher prevalence of sedentary lifestyle than those earning \$35,000 or more. Although there were not statistically significant differences between the highest and the lowest income, it does suggest a correlation between sedentary lifestyle and household income.⁴

Fig 11.5. Percent of Adult Texans with sedentary lifestyle by income



Conclusions:

The data presented here show that more progress is needed to meet the Healthy People 2010 Objective for physical activity.³ The following observations summarize our findings:

- More than two-thirds (69%) of adult Texans are not getting the amount of physical activity recommended for greater health benefits.
- Forty-two percent of adult Texans reported the main personal reason for not being more physically active is that they believe they are already getting enough physical activity.
- Fifty-one percent of adult Texans who believe they are already getting enough physical activity are not getting the amount of physical activity recommended for greater health benefits.
- Twenty-nine percent of adult Texans report the main personal reason they are not more physically active is lack of time for physical activity.

- Thirty-seven percent of adult Texans reported that the leading community reason for not being more physically active is the lack of enough fitness facilities, sidewalks, and organized programs.

Respondents reported the following barriers for being physically active at the workplace:

- Seventy-one percent of respondents reported that their workplaces do not allow work time to be used for physical activity.
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents reported that their workplaces do not have a written flextime policy allowing for physical activity.
- Eighty-two percent of respondents reported that their workplaces do not offer regular physical activity programs.
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported that their workplaces do not have facilities or equipment for physical activity.
- Fifty percent of respondents reported that their workplaces do not have a safe place to walk.

Table 2. Percent of Physical Activity at Work

N=2628	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sex										
Male	56.9	31.5	30.7	19.6	23.2	34.4	19.0	23.0	49.0	43.4
Female	26.7	29.8	27.1	19.0	22.2	26.7	16.2	24.1	51.3	46.0
Total	31.1	30.8	29.1	19.3	22.7	31.1	17.8	23.4	50.0	44.5
Race/Eth.										
White	30.5	25.6	28.6	19.0	18.4	30.5	16.2	25.0	53.4	47.0
Black	43.1	41.4	30.6	23.9	25.5	43.1	26.1	38.9	57.4	52.3
Hispanic	72.5	39.0	29.8	17.9	31.9	27.7	18.9	15.5	38.1	38.0
Other	42.8	50.0	30.4	24.5	29.7	42.8	22.9	21.9	55.7	33.6
Total	31.1	30.9	29.1	19.3	22.7	31.1	17.8	23.4	49.9	44.6
Age										
18-24	32.5	25.5	35.2	21.5	28.9	32.5	19.7	24.3	42.8	45.1
25-34	34.0	33.7	29.1	20.0	23.7	34.0	17.2	22.2	47.8	45.5
35-44	32.9	32.1	29.3	22.5	24.8	32.9	18.6	26.4	53.0	45.5
45-54	28.0	30.4	22.7	16.2	14.9	28.0	15.8	21.9	49.1	43.7
55-64	27.9	27.1	29.5	14.2	20.6	27.9	19.0	22.2	58.8	40.5
65+	10.6	24.3	48.6	8.6	30.4	10.6	16.3	15.4	49.8	43.0
Total	31.1	30.8	29.1	19.3	22.7	31.1	17.8	23.4	50.0	44.5

* Not a work-related question

1. Plan more physical activity in the next six months
2. Workplace has a flextime policy
3. Workplace allows work time to participate in physical activity
4. Workplace subsidizes health club membership for its employees
5. Workplace provides incentive(s) to its employees to be physically active during the workday
6. Workplace sponsors employee sports teams
7. Workplace offers regular physical activity programs
8. Workplace has facilities or equipment for employees to use for physical activity
9. Workplace has a safe place for employees to walk for physical activity
10. Workplace has safe stairways that employees can use for physical activity

References

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2. Mary Jane Schneider, Introduction to Public Health, Aspen Publishers, Inc. Gaithersburg, Maryland, p251,2000.
3. Healthy People 2010, US Department of Health and Human Services, 29, November 2000.
4. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 1994, Physical Activity 1994 Survey Data; Vol.2, No.1. October 1995.

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