

PARTICIPATION IN EXERCISE RECREATION AND SPORT ANNUAL REPORT | 2003



Australian Government

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Main findings

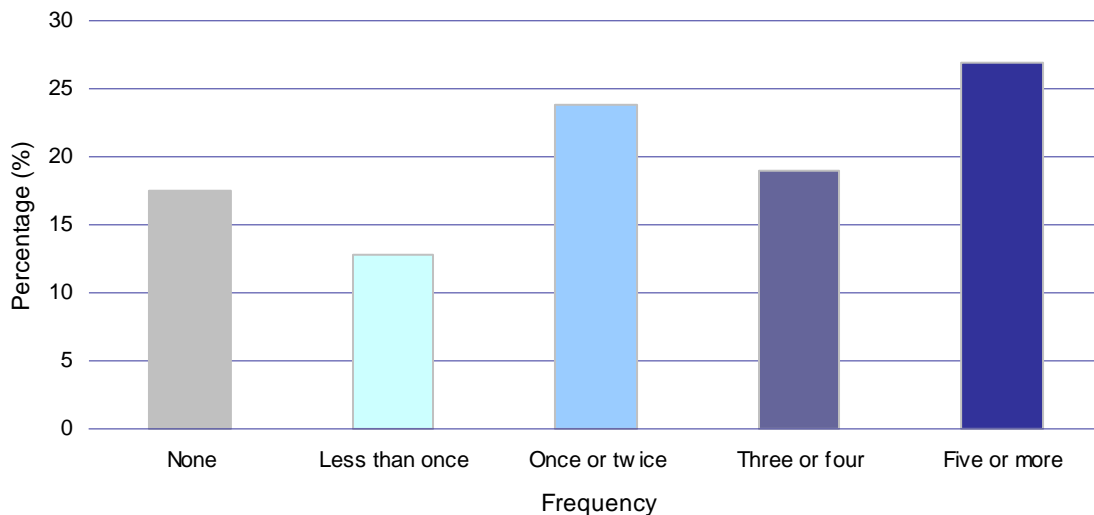
Overall participation

Overview

During the 12 months prior to interview in 2003, an estimated 12.9 million Australians aged 15 years and over participated in at least one physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport, a participation rate of 82.5% (Table 1). Household or garden chores, or activities that were part of work were not included.

However, the participation rate drops markedly when frequency of involvement is considered. An estimated 4.2 million Australians aged 15 years and over exercised five or more times per week (27.0%) (Figure 1). A total of 2.7 million people did not participate in any sport or physical activity in the 12 months prior to interview (Table 3). 10.9 million people (69.7%) participated at least once per week (Table 4).

Figure 1 Weekly Frequency of Participation (Base = Australians aged 15 and over)

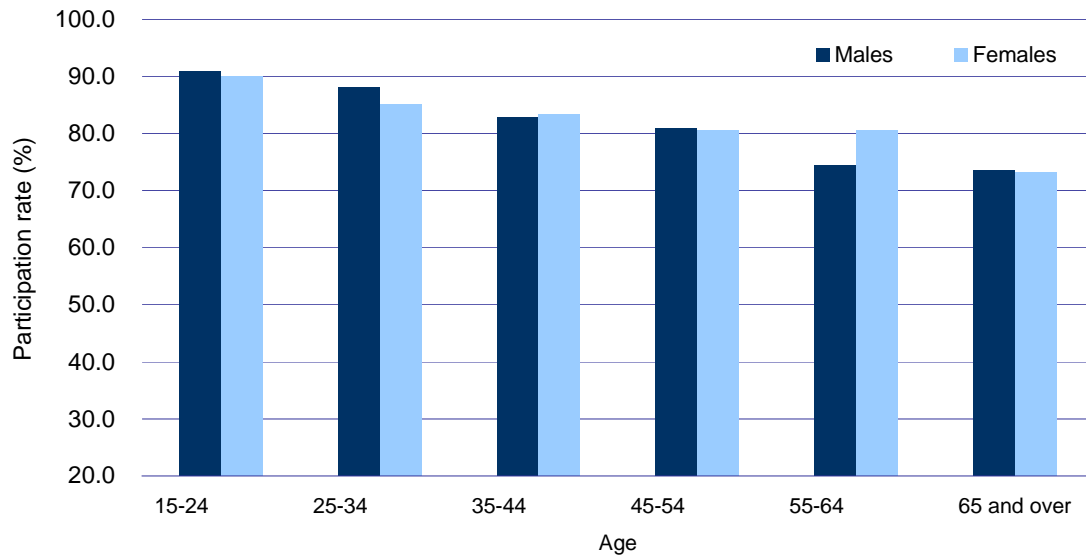


Age and gender

The overall participation rate for males and females was similar (82.6% and 82.4% respectively) (Table 1).

People aged 15 to 24 had the highest participation rate (90.4%), declining to (73.3%) for those aged 65 years and over (Figure 2 and Table 1).

Figure 2 Participation rates by age and sex (Base = All people aged 15 and over)



Region

Across Australia all States and Territories experienced an increase in participation rates from 2002 to 2003. Victoria experienced the highest increase in participation (6.1%) (Table 24).

Labour force status

Those not in the labour force, including students and retired persons, had a significantly lower participation rate (77.2%) than those employed (85.2%) and unemployed (80.8%) (Table 1).

Education

Participation rates increased with level of educational attainment, from (74.8%) for those that did not complete secondary school to (90.7%) for those with a university degree. The highest participation rate was for those persons still at secondary school (96.3%) (Table 1).

Type of activity

The activity with the highest participation rate was walking (37.9%). An estimated 5.9 million Australians aged 15 years and over walked at least once for exercise, recreation or sport in the 12 months prior to interview. This does not include bushwalking (5.8%), reported as a separate activity. Other sports and physical activities that attracted high participation rates were aerobics/fitness (16.0%), swimming (15.3%), cycling (9.4%) and tennis (9.0%) (Table 8).

Box 1 Top ten activities 2003, 2002 and 2001

(Base = Australians aged 15 and over)

2003 Rank	Activity	2003 Number of participants ('000)	2002 Rank	2002 number of participants ('000)	% change 2002–03	2001 Rank	2001 Number of participants ('000)	% change 2001–02
1	Walking	5,905.6	1	4,720.3	25.1	1	4,355.9	8.4
2	Aerobics/fitness	2,487.6	3	2,236.9	11.2	3	1,961.0	14.1
3	Swimming	2,383.1	2	2,278.0	4.6	2	2,415.5	-5.7
4	Cycling	1,471.8	4	1,419.4	3.7	4	1,438.3	-1.3
5	Tennis	1,407.3	6	1,260.5	11.6	5	1,381.8	-8.8
6	Golf	1,282.6	5	1,337.1	-4.1	6	1,240.2	7.8
7	Running	1,181.1	7	1,161.8	1.7	7	1,084.3	7.1
8	Bushwalking	902.5	8	855.5	5.5	8	794.9	7.6
9	Soccer (outdoor)	669.3	9	693.2	-3.4	10	551.3	25.7
10	Netball	614.0	10	624.6	-1.7	9	612.4	2.0

Walking had the highest participation rate for both males and females (Table 9), and across all age groups with the exception of the 15 to 24 year age group (Table 10).

For males, activities with the highest participation rates were walking (27.2%), swimming (13.4%), golf (13.3%), cycling (12.4%) and aerobics/fitness (11.9%).

For females, activities with the highest participation rates were walking (48.5%), aerobics/fitness (20.0%), swimming (17.1%), tennis (8.6%) and netball (6.9%).

In the youngest age group, 15 to 24 year olds, the activities that attracted the most participants were aerobics/fitness (19.3%), swimming (16.7%) and walking (16.3%). For the oldest age group, 65 years and over, walking (48.2%), aerobics/fitness (11.9%) and lawn bowls (9.3%) attracted the most participants.

Activities with the highest medians (that is, those that are most frequently participated in) were walking (3.0 times per week), aerobics/fitness, boxing, running and weight training (2.0 times per week) (Table 8).

Participants took part in an average (mean) of 2.2 different sports or activities in the 12 months prior to interview. This ranged from 2.6 different activities for the 15 to 24 year age group to 1.6 different activities for those aged 65 years and over. Males participated in an average of 2.2 different activities compared to an average of 2.1 different activities for female participants.

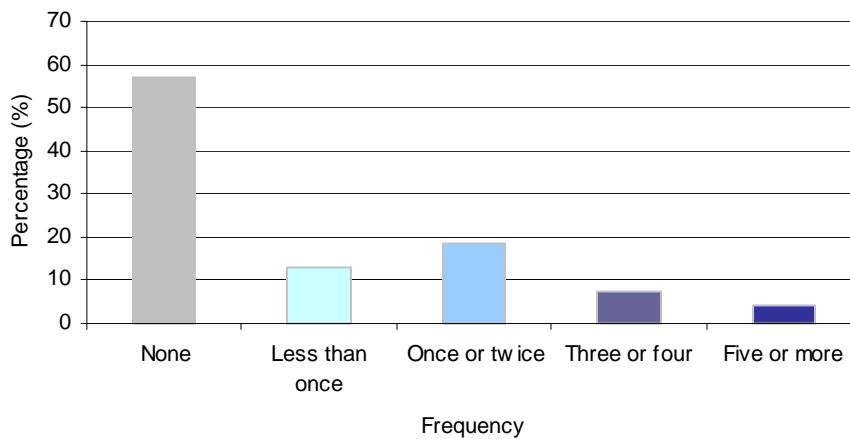
Organised participation

Overview

During the 12 months prior to interview in 2003, an estimated 6.7 million Australians aged 15 years and over participated in at least one activity that was organised by a club, association or other type of organisation. This represents a participation rate of 42.8% (Table 14). It also represents over half (51.8%) of the 12.9 million persons who participated in sport or physical activity.

In terms of frequency, 8.9 million Australians (57.2%) did not participate in organised physical activities during 2003. Two million (12.8%), participated less than once a week, 2.9 million (18.4%) participated once or twice a week, 1.2 million (7.6%) participated three or four times and 622,000 (4.0%) participated five times or more (Figure 4 and Table 3).

**Figure 4 Weekly Frequency of Participation - Organised Physical Activity
(Base = Australians aged 15 and over)**

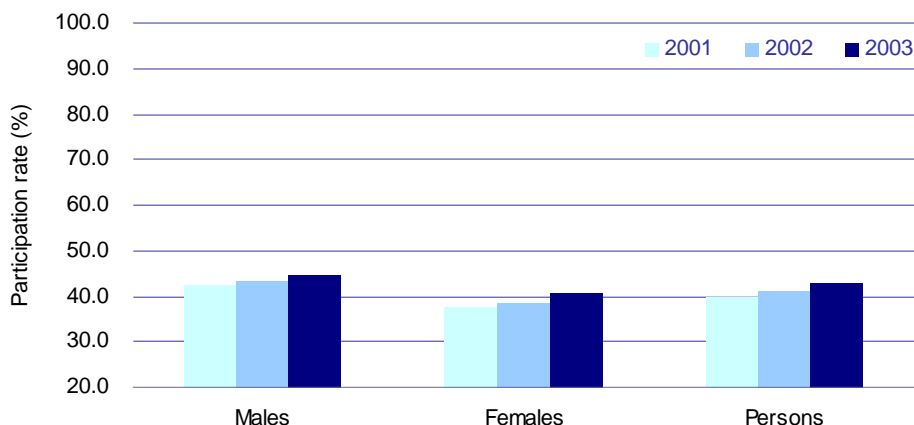


Age and gender

Of the 6.7 million persons who participated in organised sport or physical activity, participation was higher for males (44.8%) than for females (40.8%) (Figure 5 and table 14).

Organised participation rates were highest in the 15 to 24 year age group (65.2%), and declined steadily with age to 31.6% for persons aged 55 years and over.

Figure 5: Organised activity participation rates by sex
(Base = Australians aged 15 and over)



Region

Across Australia, the participation rate for organised sport and physical activities increased from 40.9% in 2002 to 42.8% in 2003. (Table 25).

Type of activity

The organised activity with the highest participation rate was aerobics/fitness (8.4%). An estimated 1.3 million persons aged 15 years and over participated in this activity in an organised environment at least once in the 12 months prior to interview. Other sports and physical activities with highly organised participation were golf (4.7%), tennis (3.8%), netball (3.5%), and outdoor soccer and swimming (2.8%) (Table 13).

Participants in organised sports or physical activity engaged in an average (mean) of 1.5 different organised activities in the 12 months prior to interview (Table 12).

Box 2 Top ten activities by number of participants in organised physical activity 2003, 2002 and 2001 (Base = Australians aged 15 and over)								
2003 Rank	Activity	2003 number of participants ('000)	2002 Rank	2002 number of participants ('000)	% change 2002-03	2001 Rank	2001 number of participants ('000)	% change 2001-02
1	Aerobics/fitness	1,305.8	1	1,087.4	20.1	1	966.5	12.5
2	Golf	729.3	2	709.5	2.8	2	655.1	8.3
3	Tennis	590.5	3	541.9	9.0	3	548.7	-1.2
4	Netball	546.0	4	523.6	4.3	4	533.2	-1.8
5	Swimming	434.4	8	333.3	30.3	8	332.5	0.2
6	Soccer (outdoor)	428.7	5	467.9	-8.4	5	377.5	23.9
7	Basketball	369.0	6	432.0	-14.6	6	364.3	18.6
8	Lawn bowls	355.0	7	337.1	5.3	10	275.9	22.2
9	Cricket (outdoor)	334.0	9	327.4	2.0	9	279.3	17.2
10	Yoga	322.1	12	294.1	9.5	15	340.8	-13.7

Organisation of the activity

An estimated 4.4 million Australians participated in activities that were organised by a 'sport or recreation club or association'. An estimated 2.4 million persons participated in activities that were organised by a 'fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre' (Table 15).

Organised versus non-organised participation

Activities where participation is most often organised by a club, association or other organisation include carpet bowls (98% of carpet bowls participants engaged at least once in organised carpet bowls), lawn bowls (97%), water polo (96%), softball (94%), and athletics/track and field, surf lifesaving and triathlons (93%) (Table 13).

Activities least likely to be organised include walking (only 3% of walking participants engaged in organised walking), waterskiing/powerboating and fishing (8%), cycling (9%), running and surf sports (11%).

Comparison with 2002

Overall participation

Participation increased by 4.7% to 82.5% for persons aged 15 years and over who participated in at least one physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport. The participation rate for males increased from 78.7% to 82.6%, and from 77.0% to 82.4% for females (Table 24).

The participation rate increased in all states and territories. The increases ranged from 6.1% to 2.1%.

Organised participation

For persons participating in at least one organised sport or physical activity, the organised participation rate has increased from 40.9% in 2002 to 42.8% in 2003. The participation rate for males increased from 43.5% to 44.8%, and for females participation has increased from 38.4% to 40.8% (Table 25).

Across Australia, most States and Territories experienced an increase in organised participation from 2002 to 2003. Victoria experienced the largest increase in organised participation at 5.1 percentage points.