

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular physical activity is critical for people of all ages to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, prevent chronic disease, and promote psychological well-being. In older adults, physical activity also helps to prevent falls and improve cognitive functioning.¹ The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that for substantial health benefits, adults should engage in at least 2½ hours per week of moderate intensity (e.g., brisk walking or gardening) or 1¼ hours per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (e.g., jogging or kick-boxing), or an equivalent combination of both, plus muscle-strengthening activities on at least 2 days per week. Additional health ben-

efits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.¹

In 2009–2011, 16.6 percent of women met the recommendations for both adequate aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity, compared to 24.0 percent of men (data not shown). Muscle-strengthening activities provide additional benefits to those of aerobic exercise, such as increased bone strength¹; however, women were much less likely to meet recommended levels of muscle-strengthening activity as compared to aerobic activity (19.8 versus 43.9 percent, respectively).

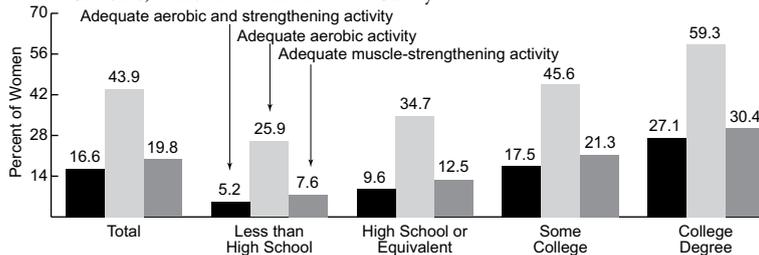
Physical activity varied by education and race and ethnicity. Compared to women with less than a high school diploma, women with a college degree were more than twice as likely to meet aero-

bic activity guidelines (59.3 versus 25.9 percent, respectively) and four times as likely to meet muscle-strengthening guidelines (30.4 versus 7.6 percent, respectively). Non-Hispanic White women and non-Hispanic women of multiple races were generally more likely to report adequate levels of aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening activity than women of other race and ethnic groups. For example, about 23 percent of non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic women of multiple races reported adequate levels of muscle-strengthening activity compared to 15 percent or less among women of other races and ethnicities.

While not everyone may have access to fitness facilities, communities can promote physical activity through designs that include sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, walking trails, and parks.¹

Adequate Physical Activity* Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Educational Attainment and Activity Type, 2009–2011

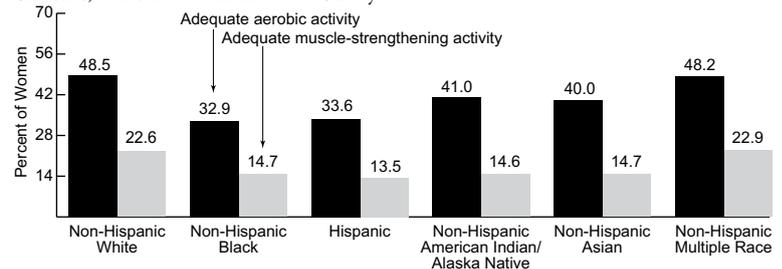
Source II.1: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Adequate aerobic activity is defined as 2.5 hours per week of moderate-intensity activity or 1.25 hours per week of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of both; adequate muscle-strengthening activity is defined as performing muscle-strengthening activities, such as lifting weights or calisthenics, on 2 or more days per week; all estimates are age-adjusted.

Adequate Physical Activity* Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Race/Ethnicity** and Activity Type, 2009–2011

Source II.1: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*Adequate aerobic activity is defined as 2.5 hours per week of moderate-intensity activity or 1.25 hours per week of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of both; adequate muscle-strengthening activity is defined as performing muscle-strengthening activities, such as lifting weights or calisthenics, on 2 or more days per week; all estimates are age-adjusted. **The sample of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders was too small to produce reliable results.