



Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions on Sport and Recreational Walking

30th April 2020

Introduction & Key Findings

Key Findings



Irish adults have adapted remarkably well in being physically active during this difficult period. More adults are now physically active than before the restrictions were introduced with a substantial increase in the numbers walking for recreation.



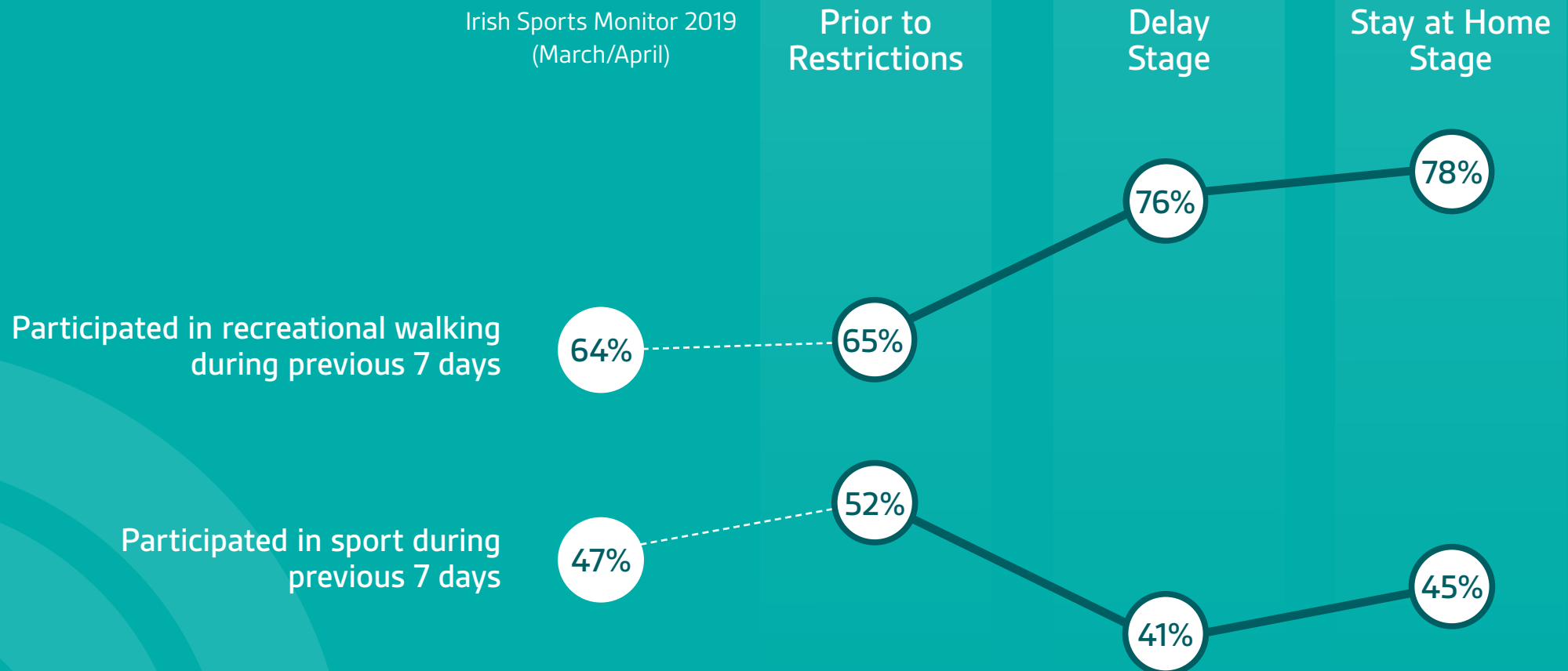
The numbers running and cycling increased during this period, while the closure of many sports facilities and curtailment of team-based sports caused a decline in personal exercise (gym-based activities), swimming and gaelic football among others.



Introduction

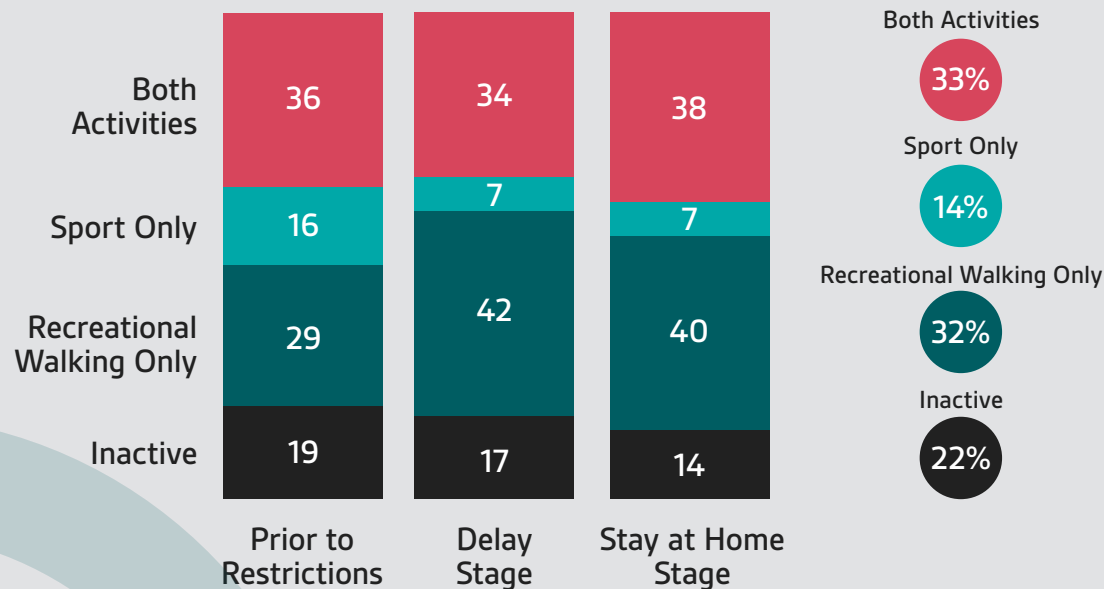
- This report presents the findings of research conducted by Ipsos MRBI on behalf of Sport Ireland to measure participation in sport and recreational walking during March and April 2020.
- The research includes the same questions asked on the Irish Sports Monitor. Comparisons to the results from the March and April waves of the Irish Sports Monitor 2019 are included where relevant.
- The survey was undertaken in three waves: 28 February to 9 March, 16 to 31 March; and 1 to 13 April. The “Delay” phase of Ireland’s response to Covid-19 commenced on 12 March (school closures, limited outdoor gatherings, work from home if possible, etc.) while the “Stay at Home” enhanced lockdown phase commenced on 27 March.
- Given that the survey asks people to report on their activity in the previous 7 days, this means that the first wave of the survey pre-dated most of the limitations on movement. The second wave happened mostly under the “Delay” phase and the third wave happened mostly during the “Stay at Home” phase.
- 1,009 respondents took part in Waves 1 and 3, and 1,003 took part in Wave 2.
- Full technical details are provided in the Appendix.

Irish adults have adapted to maintain their activity levels during the Covid-19 restrictions



Overall, the number of inactive people has declined by 5% over this period and by 8% compared to the same time last year

Types of Activity Participated In



Inactive means taking part in no sport or recreational walking. It has the same meaning as sedentary in the National Sports Policy.

Commentary

- Since the introduction of the restrictions the proportion that is active has increased by 5 points, with similar increases across both genders.
- The proportion of women taking part in both activities has remained broadly unchanged at 40%, while the proportion of men doing so has increased from 30% to 35%.
- The proportion in the higher socio-economic group ABC1 that is inactive has declined from 15% to 7%, while the proportion in the C2DE group remains broadly unchanged (prior to restrictions: 21%, Stay at home stage: 20%).



Stronger declines in participation in sport among women and those aged 45 and older

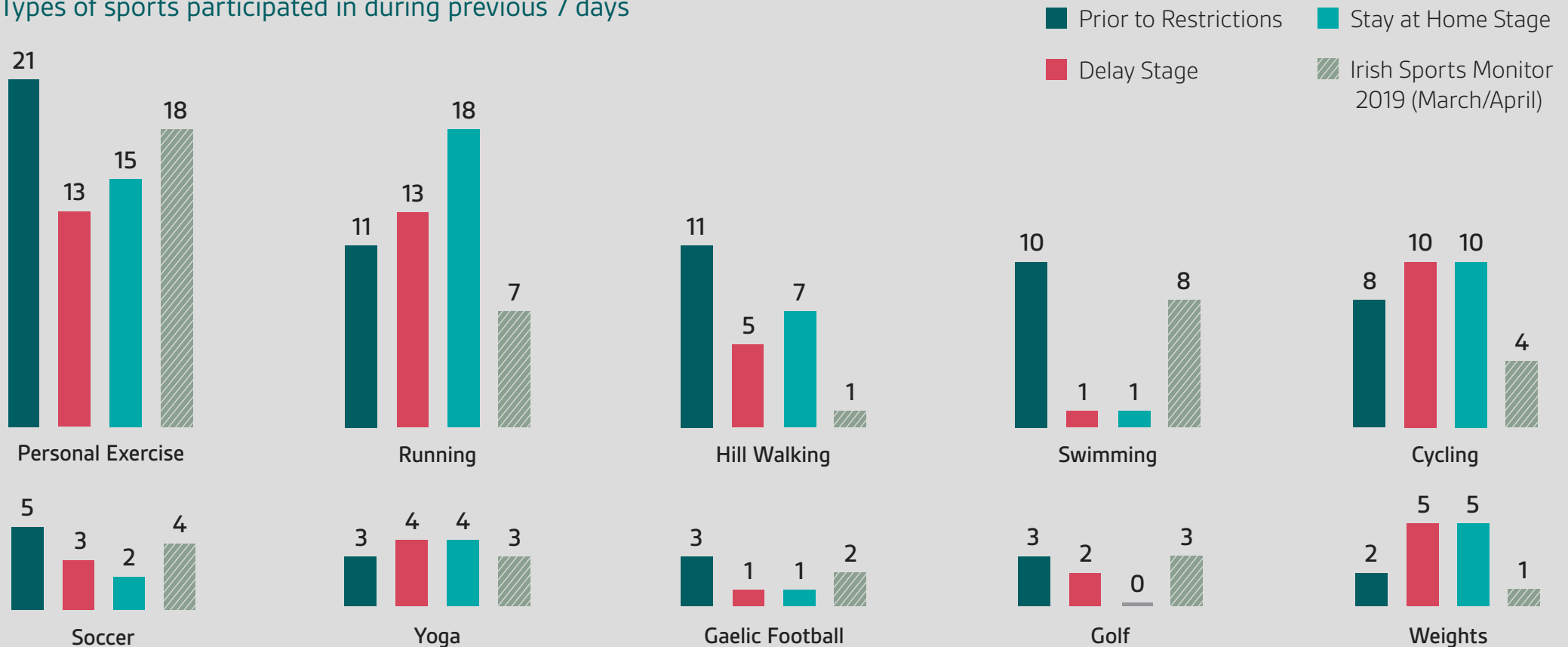
Participation in sport during previous 7 days

		Prior to Restrictions	Delay Stage	Stay at Home Stage
Gender	Men	49	43	44
	Women	55	38	46
Age Group	15-24	71	60	73
	25-34	57	44	51
	35-44	57	50	55
	45-54	50	38	40
	55+	39	25	26
Location	Dublin	56	47	51
	Rest of Leinster	51	41	48
	Munster	46	34	38
	Connacht/Ulster	57	40	43
Social Class	ABC1	62	52	57
	C2DE	47	37	36

- Similar levels of sports participation among both men and women during the current “Stay at Home” phase.
- Participation among those aged under 45 has been more robust than among older groups.
- Munster and Connacht/Ulster have experienced the largest declines in participation to date during the Covid crisis.

Activities that require access to facilities such as gym and swimming as well as team-based activities declined, while participation in running and cycling increased over this period

Types of sports participated in during previous 7 days





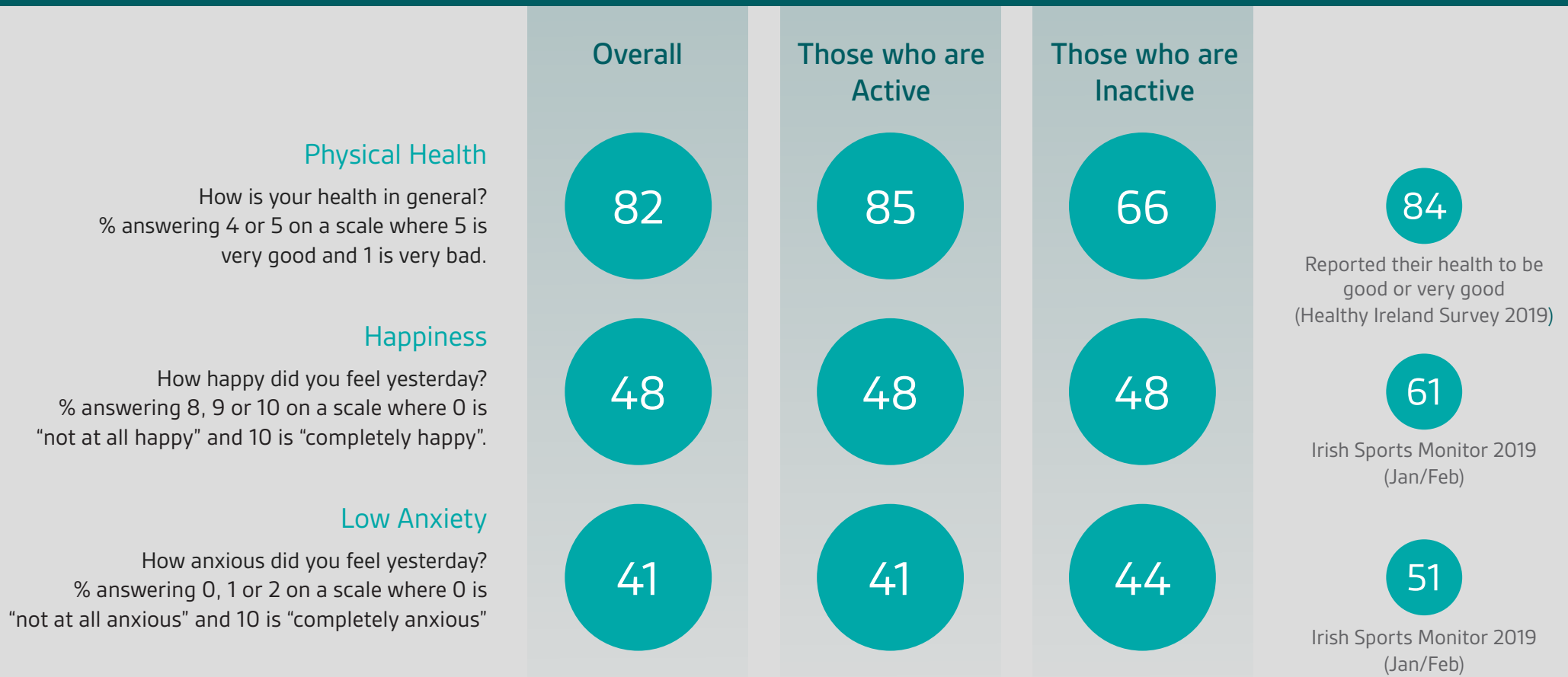
Increases in recreation walking across all demographic groups, with particularly strong increases in Dublin

Participation in recreational walking during previous 7 days

		Prior to Restrictions	Delay Stage	Stay at Home Stage
Gender	Men	61	71	75
	Women	70	81	81
Age Group	15-24	51	75	82
	25-34	64	76	82
	35-44	65	81	85
	45-54	75	80	78
	55+	67	70	69
Location	Dublin	60	75	80
	Rest of Leinster	68	78	82
	Munster	66	75	76
	Connacht/Ulster	68	76	71
Social Class	ABC1	67	82	87
	C2DE	64	74	71

- Increases in recreational walking among both genders and across all age groups, particularly among those aged under 45.
- Stronger increases in recreational walking in Dublin than in other parts of the country.
- Also, stronger increases among those in the higher socio-economic group ABC1.
- Previous waves of the Irish Sports Monitor found that recreational walking is most likely to take place on local roads and in local parks.

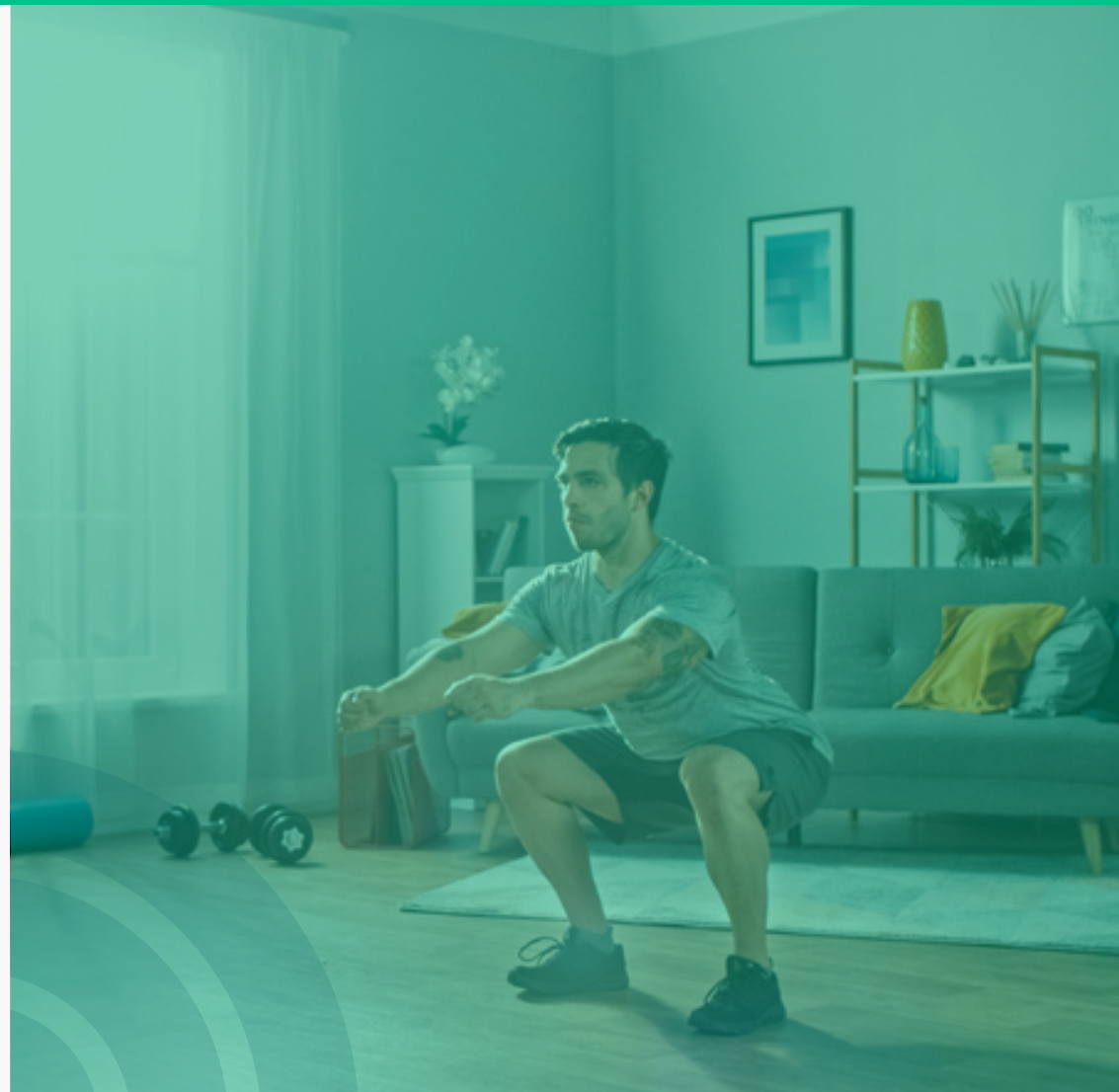
Being active helps sustain people's self-rated levels of physical health, but the effect of Covid-19 on reported well-being is profound among both inactive and inactive groups



Those who were active are those participating in sport or recreational walking during the previous 7 days.
Those who were inactive are those not participating in sport or recreational walking during the previous 7 days.

Appendix - Technical details

- Ipsos MRBI conducts an ongoing omnibus survey involving 1,000 respondents every two weeks. Respondents are aged 15+ and are contacted using Random Digit Dialling through mobile and landline phone numbers. At analysis stage, the data is weighted in line with the known profile of the population according to the latest CSO estimates.
- In late February, Sport Ireland agreed with Ipsos to include a number of questions on the survey to assess participation in recreational walking and sport.
- Three questions were included in the March waves: one on recreational walking (did you take part in a recreational walk in the past 7 days); and two on sports participation (did you play sport in the past 7 days and, if so, please list up to 3 sports participated in). The questions used are identical to those used in the Irish Sports Monitor.
- 1,009 respondents took part in Waves 1 and 3, and 1,003 took part in Wave 2.





SPÓRT ÉIREANN
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