

CANADIANS AND STRESS: A SPECIAL REPORT

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CANADIANS AND STRESS: A SPECIAL REPORT

Toronto, ONTARIO – According to a poll conducted by Ipsos-Reid for CTV and the Globe and Mail, one in six Canadians (17%) agree that there has been a time in their life when they've been under so much stress that they've wanted to commit suicide. Important, given this finding, is that 85% of Canadians do not believe that it is a sign of personal weakness to seek professional help to deal with stress.

As for what the main causes of stress in Canadian's lives are, their job or work (43%) and their finances (39%) are the most cited. At the same time, one in ten Canadians (10%) indicate that they have 'no stress in their lives'.

Sleep patterns (48%) and personal health (41%) are the areas that Canadians say are the most negatively affected by the stress in their lives. On the other side, three in ten (31%) employed Canadians, say that the stress in their lives has had a positive impact on the 'quality of work they do at work.'

The afternoon (noon to just before 5:30pm: 32%) appears to be typically the most stressful hours reported by Canadians, followed by the early part of the morning (5am to just before 8:30am: 19%), the rest of the morning (8:30am to just before noon: 15%), and the evening (5:30pm to just before 11:30pm: 12%). Overnight (11:30pm to just before 5am: 5%) appears to be the least stressful part of the day for Canadians.



A significant minority (43%) of Canadians indicate that they feel they do not have the degree of control over their lives that they would like. Similarly, 46% say that they do not have the degree of control over their stress levels that they would like.

Exercise (46%) is the main way that Canadians report to relieve their stress, followed by reading (16%), and sports or hobbies (12%). Six percent report that they do not do anything to relieve their stress.

These are the findings of two Ipsos-Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail survey's conducted between February 12th and February 14th, and February 26th and February 28th, 2002. The poll results are based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians per wave with two separate questionnaires. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

One in Six (17%) Have Thought of Suicide When Under Stress

One in six Canadians (17%) agree that there has been a time in their life when they've been under so much stress that they've wanted to commit suicide.

- Women (20%) are more likely than men (15%) to agree with this view.
- Canadians in lower (22%) income households are more likely to express this view than those in middle (15%) or upper (13%) income households.



- Residents of British Columbia (22%) are twice as likely to agree to this than those on the opposite coast in Atlantic Canada (11%).

Importantly, 85% of Canadians do not believe that it is a sign of personal weakness to seek professional help to deal with stress.

- Women (90%) are more likely than men (79%) to believe this to be the case.
- Canadians in upper (91%) income households are more likely than those in lower income households (78%) to indicate this view. Canadians in middle income households (86%) reflect the national average.
- Those with a university degree (91%), and those with some university or other post-secondary education (87%) are more likely than those with a high school diploma (81%) or less education (72%) to express this view.

Work (43%) and Finances (39%) Top Causes of Stress for Canadians

As for the main causes of stress in Canadian's lives, their job or work (43%) and their finances (39%) are the most cited. Other causes of stress mentioned include children (10%), health (7%), school (5%), 'too much to do/too little time' (4%), personal relationships/family members (3%), spouse or partner (3%), traffic/driving (3%), other family members health (3%), politics/government (2%), pace of life (2%) and home (2%). One in ten (10%) Canadians indicate that they have 'no stress in their lives'.

- Younger (52%) and middle aged (50%) are twice as likely as older (24%) Canadians to say that the main source of stress in their lives is their job or work, while older (15%) Canadians are more likely to cite their health as a cause of stress than middle aged (7%) or younger (2%) Canadians.



- Finances are more of a cause of stress to younger (44%) than older (32%) Canadians, while their children cause more stress for middle aged (16%) Canadians than either their older (7%) or younger (6%) counterparts. Canadians in lower income households (45%) are more likely than those in middle (38%) or upper (37%) income households to say that finances are a main cause of stress in their lives.
- Work/job is more a source of stress for men (48%) than women (39%), while having too much to do/too little time is more a stress factor for women (6%) than for men (1%).
- Canadians in upper (56%) and middle (47%) income households are more likely to cite their work or job as the main source of stress in their lives than are those in lower income households (27%).

Meanwhile, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians indicate that they put too much pressure on themselves, while the remaining one-third (33%) disagree with this view.

- Middle aged (73%) and younger (71%) Canadians are more likely to agree with this view than are older (55%) Canadians.
- Women (73% versus 62% of men) are more likely to say they put too much pressure on themselves.
- Canadians in highest (71%) and lowest (71%) household income groups are more likely than those in the middle household income group (62%) to feel this way.
- Regionally, Ontarians (72%) are more likely to feel they put too much pressure on themselves, followed by those in British Columbia (68%), Alberta (67%), Atlantic Canada (65%) and Quebec (64%). Residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (57%) are the least likely to feel this way.



Four in ten (40%) say that they feel stressed because the world around them is changing too quickly, while in comparison 59% disagree with this view.

- Women (46%) are more likely than men (35%) to agree with this view.
- Canadians in lower income households (49%) are more likely to agree with this view. This compares to those in middle (41%) and upper (31%) income households.
- Those with only a high school diploma (47%) or less education (45%) are more likely to agree that they feel stressed because the world is changing too quickly, than are those with a post-secondary education or some university (40%) or those with a university degree (33%).
- Regionally, residents of Quebec (54%) are the most likely to agree with this view, while those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (24%) are least likely to feel this way.

So what do parents (34% of Canadians report living with children under 18 years of age) perceive is the effect of this changing, stressful world on Canada's children? According to the study, six in ten Canadians (61%) with children living at home, express the view that their children are making a lot more decisions about their lives and their family than they did when they were a child. However, only one-third (34%) agree that they are so busy that their children have had to become more independent than they might otherwise have needed to

Majority (55%) Say They Are More Cynical About Things

A majority (55%) of Canadians believe they are more cynical about things than they used to be, while 44% disagree that they have become more cynical.



- Canadians in upper (58%) and middle (57%) income households are more likely to indicate agreement than those in lower income households (50%).
- Regionally, residents of British Columbia (71%) are the most likely to say that they have become more cynical, while Quebecers (29%) are the least likely to say this.
- There is no statistical difference on this subject across age groups or gender.

One in three (30%) indicate that they feel lonely more frequently than they would like to, while an equal number (30%) say that loneliness is one of their greatest fears.

- Canadians in the lowest income households are more likely to indicate that they feel lonely more frequently than they would like to (38%), compared to those in middle (32%) or upper (21%) income households.
- Those in lower (34%) and middle (32%) income households are more likely than their counterparts in upper income households (25%) to indicate that loneliness is one of their greatest fears.
- Younger (35%) Canadians are more likely than either their middle aged (29%) or older (25%) counterparts to agree that loneliness is one of their greatest fears.

Sleep (48%) and Health (41%) Most Negatively Affected by Stress

Sleep patterns (negative effect 48%; positive effect 16%) and personal health (negative effect 41%; positive effect 20%) are the areas that Canadians say are the most negatively affected by the stress in their lives, followed by relations at home or with other family members (negative effect 33%; positive effect 22%), and on their sex lives (negative effect 23%; positive

effect 14%). The effect of stress on relations with friends is seen by an equivalent number as having a negative effect (21%) as having a positive effect (24%).

- Women are more likely than man to indicate their stress has had a negative impact on their sleep patterns (52% versus 44% of men) and on their personal health (46% versus 35% of men).
- Canadians under 55 years of age (51%) are more likely to say that their stress has a negative impact on their sleep patterns than those 55 or older (42%). Those between 35 and 54 years of age (45%) are more likely than those 55+ (35%) to indicate that stress has a negative impact on their personal health. The negative effects of stress on family relations appears to be stronger among younger (40%) and middle aged (37%) Canadians than among older (20%) Canadians. As for the effect of stress on Canadian's sex lives, a larger proportion of middle aged (29%) Canadians indicate that it has a negative effect than do their younger (18%) counterparts.
- Upper household income (54%) Canadians are more likely to say that stress has a negative impact on their sleep patterns than Canadians in the lowest income households (45%), while the upper household income (46%) group is also more likely than the lower (40%) or middle (38%) household income groups to say that stress has a negative impact on their personal health.
- Regionally, those most likely to indicate a negative effect on their sleep patterns are located in Ontario (52%) and British Columbia (51%) while those in Quebec (44%) and Atlantic Canada (42%) are least likely. As for those who say stress has a negative effect on their personal health, they are more likely located in Alberta (49%), British Columbia (48%) and Atlantic Canada (47%), followed by Quebec (42%), Ontario (36%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%).

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Stress and the Workplace

Three in ten (31%) employed Canadians, say that the stress in their lives has had a positive impact on the 'quality of work they do at work', while one quarter (24%) say stress has a positive impact on their relations with co-workers. This compares to the 23% who indicate that stress has had a negative impact on their quality of work on the job and 19% regarding their relations with co-workers.

- Residents of Quebec (47%) are the most likely to indicate that stress has a positive effect on their work on the job. This compares to the views of Albertans (21%) and those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (20%).

At the same time that Canadians cite their job as a source of stress in their lives, almost half (48%) agree that having stress shows that you're involved in important things. In comparison just over half (52%) disagree with this view.

- This view appears to be more prevalent among men (54%) than women (41%).

An equal number (47%) indicate that people sometimes tell others they're stressed just to impress them.

- Younger (53%) Canadians are more likely to express this view than are middle aged (46%) or older (44%) Canadians.
- Men (50% versus 45% of women) are more likely to think that sometimes people say they are stressed just to impress them.

While Canadians indicate that their work or job is a source of stress in their lives, they do not appear to be malicious towards their boss or co-workers for this fact. In fact, only one in ten



(13%) employed Canadians indicate that they 'have felt so much stress at times at [their] work that [they] have done or seriously thought about doing things to get back at [their] boss or co-workers in some way'.

- A slightly higher proportion of younger (15%) and middle aged (14%) workers indicate they have felt this way than older (9%) workers.

Modern communication devices such as cell phones and email are thought of as causing stress, with one in five (18%) reporting that they feel stress when they haven't checked their phone or email messages.

The Afternoon (31%) Most Stressful Time Period for Canadians

The afternoon (noon to just before 5:30pm: 32%) appears to be typically the most stressful hours reported by Canadians, followed by the early part of the morning (5am to just before 8:30am: 19%), the rest of the morning (8:30am to just before noon: 15%), and the evening (5:30pm to just before 11:30pm: 12%). The night (11:30pm to just before 5am: 5%) appears to be the least stressful part of the day for Canadians.

- Younger (36%) and middle aged (32%) Canadians are more likely to say that the afternoon is the most stressful time of day than are older (22%) Canadians. This pattern also holds true for the morning (8:30am to just before noon) with 19% of those between 35 and 54 and 18% of 18 to 34 year olds indicating that this is the most stress full time of the day for them, compared to only 8% of those Canadians 55 years of age and older.
- While men and woman are equally likely to say that the afternoon (men 29%; women 32%), the early morning (men 19%; women 16%), the rest of the morning (men 17%;



women 15%) and overnight (men 6%; women 5%) are the most stressful, women (15% versus 9% of men) are more likely to indicate the evening (5:30pm to just before 11:30pm) as their most stressful time during the day.

- Canadians from households with incomes of over \$30,000 (18%) are more likely to mention the morning (8:30am to just before noon) as most stressful than those in households with incomes of less than \$30,000 (11%).
- Regionally, residents of Atlantic Canada (41%) are the most likely to indicate that the afternoon is the most stressful time of the day, compared to the views of those in Ontario (27%) and Quebec (27%).

As for why they feel the most stress at that particular time of the day, the largest number indicate that it is related to their work or to school, with specific mentions of general job/work related (20%), end of the workday (11%), starting work (8%), getting ready for work (6%), other mentions of work (5%) and school/homework (8%). A second general area includes reasons associated with home life, including getting children ready or picking them up (9%), household chores (9%), and other family problems or responsibilities (7%). Other specific reasons cited include commuting to and from work (7%), feeling tired or fatigued (7%), just that it is the busiest time of the day (5%) and financial problems/bills (3%).

- Middle aged (24%) and younger (21%) Canadians are more likely to say they feel stressed at a particular time due to their job or work related, compared to older (12%) Canadians. Younger (18% versus 4% of middle aged and 0% of older Canadians) are far more likely to cite school or homework as a cause of stress for a particular time. Older (16%) Canadians are more likely to cite feeling tired or fatigued as a source of stress at a particular time during the day. This compares to 7% of middle aged and 4% of younger Canadians.

- Men (10% versus 5% of women) are more likely to indicate that starting work is the reason they feel stressed at a certain time during the day. Women are more likely to say that household chores (16% versus 3% of men) and getting children ready or picking them up (14% versus 4%) are why they feel stressed at a particular time during the day.
- Canadians in upper income households (28%) are more likely than those in middle (16%) or lower (16%) income households to cite job or work related reason for feeling stressed at a particular time in the day.

Four in Ten (43%) Canadians Say They Do Not Have The Degree of Control Over Their Lives They Would Like

A significant minority (43%) of Canadians indicate that they feel they do not have the degree of control over their lives that they would like.

- Middle aged (48%) are more likely to agree that they do not have the degree of control over their lives as they would like compared to older (36%) Canadians.

Similarly, 46% say that they do not have the degree of control over their stress levels that they would like.

- Younger (51%) and middle aged (49%) Canadians are more likely than their older (37%) counterparts to agree with this view.

Exercise (46%) Top Way to Relieve Stress For Canadians

Exercise (46%) is the main way that Canadians report to relieve their stress, followed by reading (16%), sports or hobbies (12%). Other stress relievers employed by Canadians

include socializing or going out (8%), time with family (7%), drinking or drugs (6%), listening to music (6%), watching TV (5%), meditating (5%), resting or relaxing (4%), talking (4%), working or keeping busy (3%), praying/going to church (3%), holiday/vacation (3%), taking a bath (3%), computer/video games (3%), watching movies (2%), sleeping (2%), eating well (2%), gardening/yard work (1%), taking prescription drugs or anti-depressants (1%). Six percent report that they do not do anything to relieve their stress.

- Younger (50%) and middle aged (49%) Canadians are more likely than their older (39%) counterparts to indicate that they exercise to relieve stress in their lives. While older Canadians are more likely than those younger to indicate that they read (23% versus 15% of 18 to 34 year olds and 12% of 35 to 54 year olds) or use sports/hobbies (18% versus 11% of 35 to 54 year olds and 8% of 18 to 34 year olds) to relieve stress in their lives.
- Those Canadians with a university degree (60%) are more likely than those some university/post-secondary education (46%), high school diploma (44%) or less than a high school diploma (27%) to indicate that they exercise to relieve stress.
- Canadians in upper (53%) and middle (49%) income households are more likely to exercise to relieve stress than are those in lower income households (35%).
- Regionally, residents of British Columbia (56%) are more likely to exercise to relieve stress, followed by those in Quebec (48%), Ontario (45%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (43%), Atlantic Canada (41%) and Alberta (40%).
- Women (21%) are almost twice as likely to say they read to relieve stress than are men (11%).



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