



The Pump Up Your Future Project was offered by the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres (OAYEC) to youth employment counselors across the province in over 70 member agencies. The project aimed to provide youth with health and fitness information that could easily be incorporated into daily life. To do this, the Pump Up Your Future Project created a 'train-the-trainer' facilitator curriculum to help youth employment counselors provide health promoting workshops and activities in their agencies to youth in search of employment. The curriculum provides practical, easy-to-use information on topics such as physical activity, nutrition, motivation, relaxation and self-care.

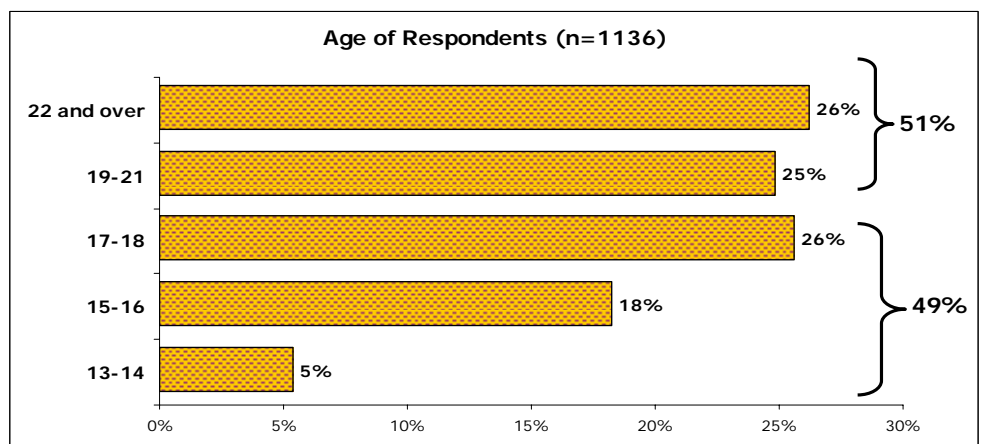
Pump Up Your Future raised the awareness levels of both youth and youth service providers across the province. As a result, youth employment centres have reported integrating materials and resources into existing service offerings and workshops.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

On-line youth surveys were conducted across the province to collect information on the eating, exercise and relaxation habits of youth aged 13 to 22 years and over. A total of 1137 responses were gathered from all youth exposed to the Pump Up Your Future curriculum in over 70 youth employment centres across the province.

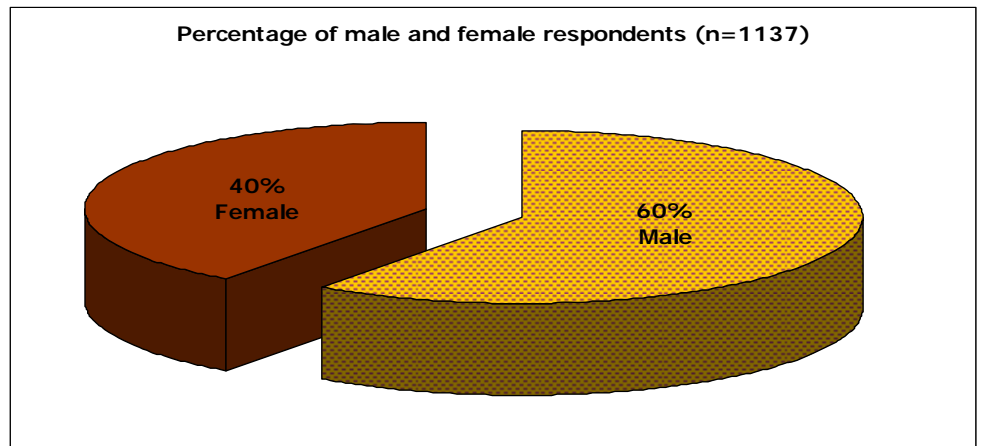
Of 1137 survey respondents:

- Almost half were high- school aged, between the years of 13 to 18 (49%)
- A significant percentage were above the age of 19 years (51%)



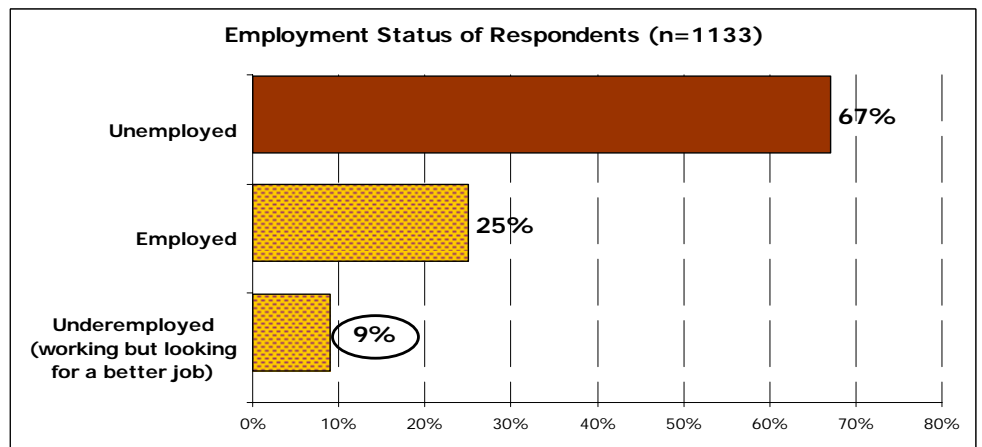
Respondents were asked to indicate their gender:

- A majority of males reported on the status of their health and physical activity practices (60%)



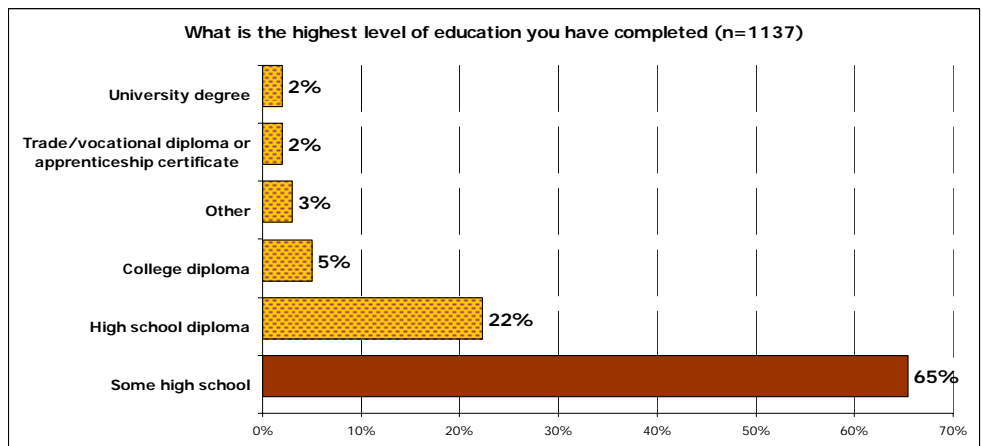
A total of 1133 respondents indicated their employment status:

- Most respondents indicated they were unemployed (67%)
- A small number of participants indicated they were underemployed; that is, they were currently employed and searching for 'better' sources of employment (9%)



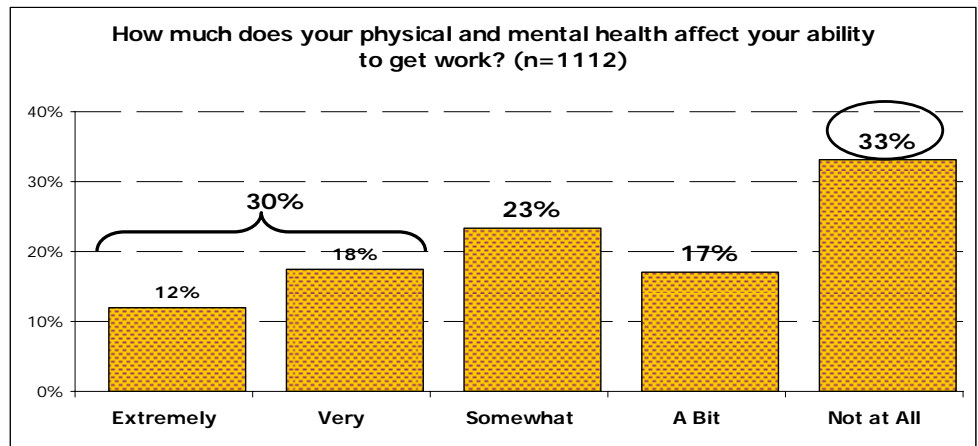
Levels of educational attainment were assessed for all respondents:

- The majority of respondents indicated having completed some level of high-school education (65%)
- Others indicated they had received a high-school diploma (22%)
- A small percentage of participants indicated they received a college diploma (5%)



Finally, participants were asked to comment on the degree to which their mental and physical health affected their ability to gain employment:

- A sizeable number of participants stated their ability to gain employment was significantly affected by their mental and physical health (30%)
- In similar proportion, others indicated that their mental and physical health did not affect their ability to obtain employment (33%).

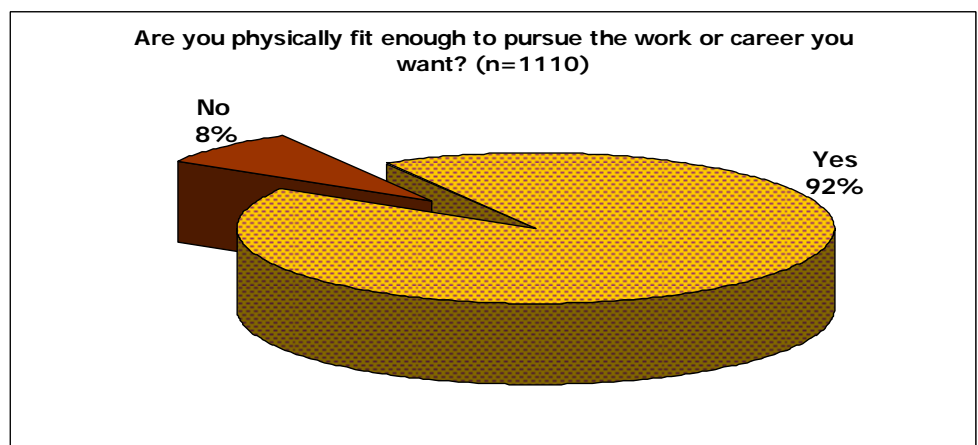


## EXERCISE HABITS

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian youth should be engaged in daily physical activity that expends energy to a level of at least eight kilocalories per kilogram of body weight. Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Youth recommends that youth increase time spent doing some form of physical exercise to a minimum of 30 minutes per day, to an optimal suggested level of 90 minutes a day. It is also recommended that youth reduce the level of sedentary activity (e.g., television watching) by a minimum of 30 minutes, to an optimal reduction of 90 minutes a day. 1137 youth across the province indicated their current engagement in physical activities on a weekly basis.

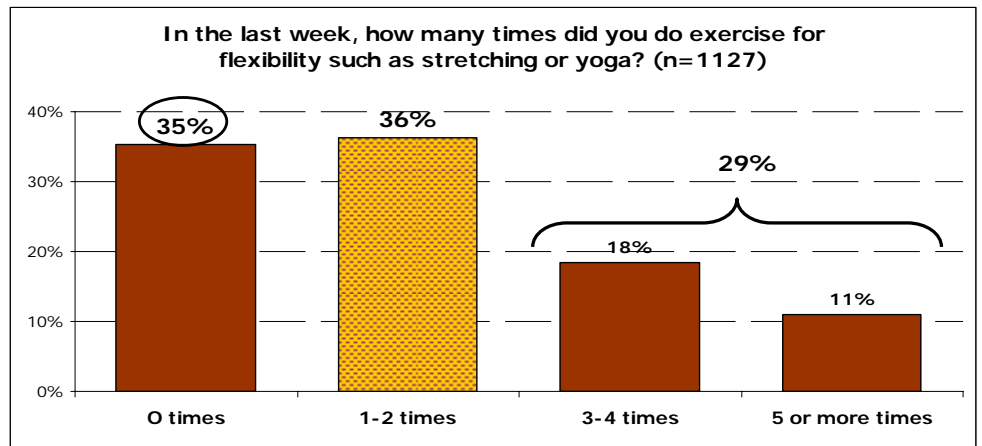
Participants were asked to assess the suitability of their fitness levels for their desired careers:

- A small number indicated that their physical fitness limits their ability to participate in the workforce (8%)



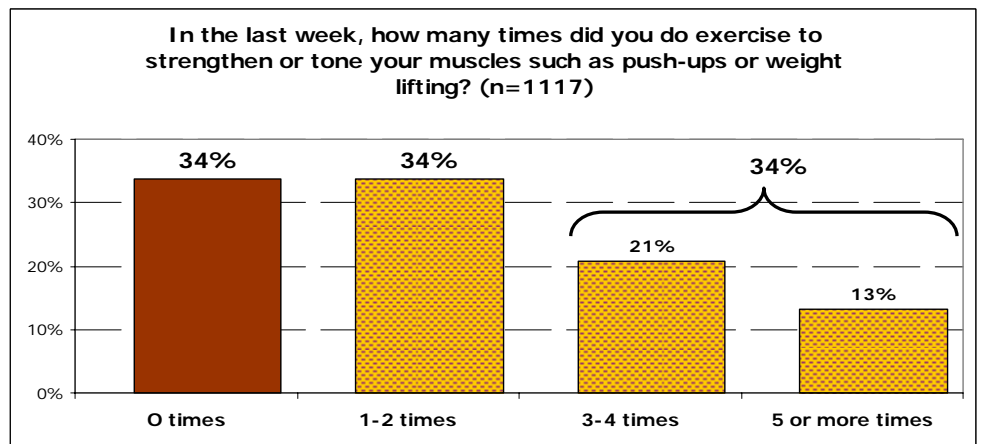
Youth indicated their level of engagement in stretching and flexibility enhancing exercises on a weekly basis:

- A significant percentage of respondents indicated they did not participate in some form of flexibility exercise (35%)
- A similar percentage indicated participating in flexibility enhancing exercises 1 to 2 times a week (36%)
- Others indicated participating in flexibility enhancing exercises 3 to 5 times a week or more (29%)



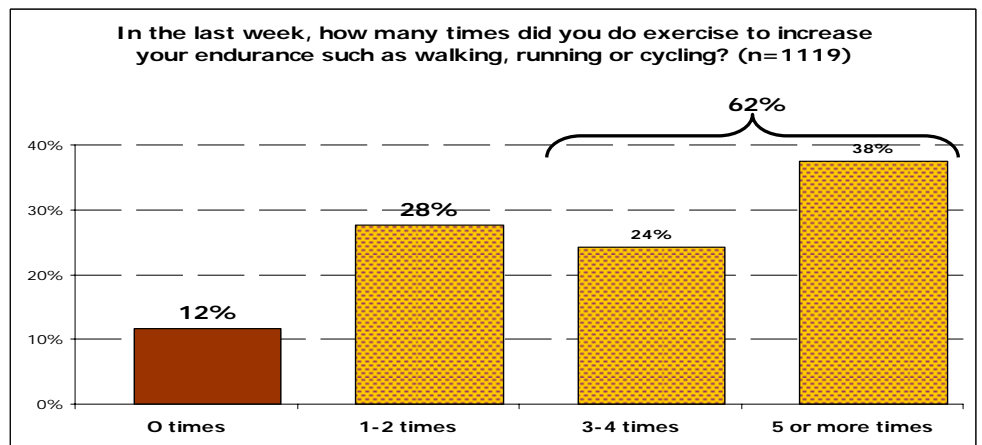
Youth indicated their level of engagement in strength training on a weekly basis:

- Some did not do any exercise to strengthen or tone muscles (34%)
- Some exercised to strengthen or tone muscles 2 times a week or less (34%)
- Some exercised to strengthen or tone muscles 3 to 5 times a week or more (34%)



Participation in cardiovascular endurance on a weekly basis was also reported among respondents:

- Some did not do any endurance enhancing exercises such as walking, running or cycling (12%)
- Others participated in endurance enhancing exercises 2 times a week or less (28%)



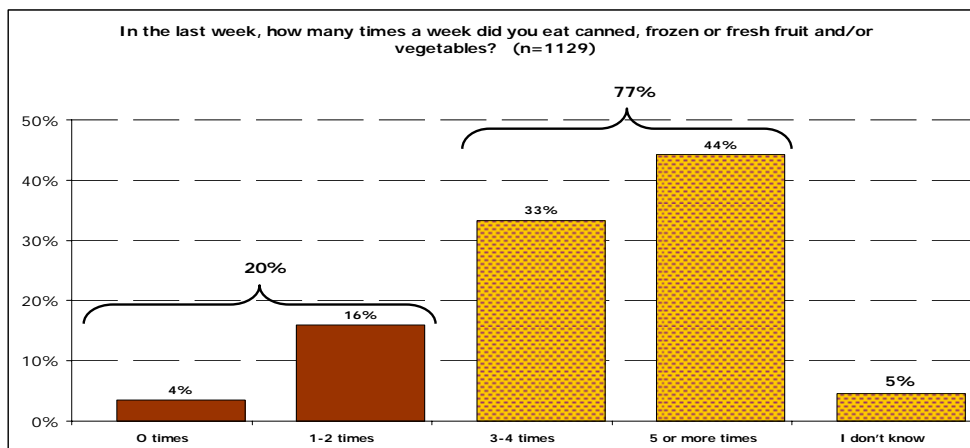
The majority of participants indicated participating in endurance enhancing exercises 3 to 5 times a week or more (62%)

## HEALTHY EATING PRACTICES

Through Canada's Food Guide, Health Canada recommends that young adults eat dark, leafy green vegetables, incorporate whole grains into their daily consumption, make low-fat dairy choices, and select lean meats and alternatives such as beans, lentils and soy products. The following graphs represent the eating practices of youth across the province.

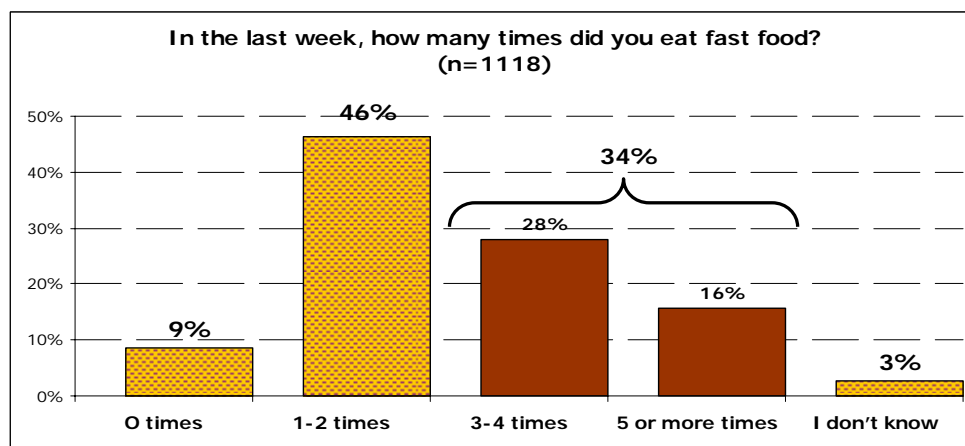
Youth were asked to indicate their consumption of fruits and vegetables on a weekly basis:

- Some participants indicated eating canned, frozen or fresh fruits and / or vegetables 2 times a week or less (20%)
- The majority of respondents indicated eating canned, frozen or fresh fruits and / or vegetables 3 to 5 times a week or more (77%).



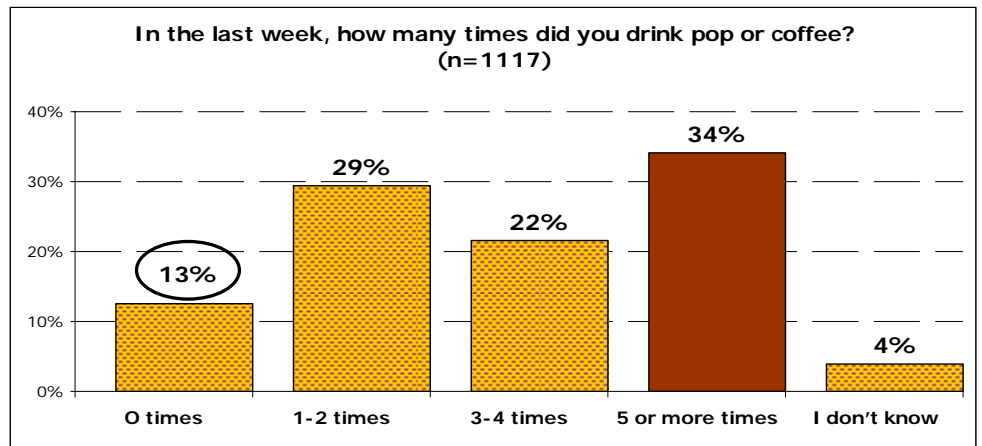
Respondents were also asked to indicate how much fast food they consume on a weekly basis:

- A small percentage of participants indicated they had not eaten fast food in the last week (9%)
- Almost half of respondents indicated eating fast food approximately 1 to 2 times in the last week (46%)
- A high percentage of participants indicated having eaten fast food 3 to 5 times or more in the last week (44%).



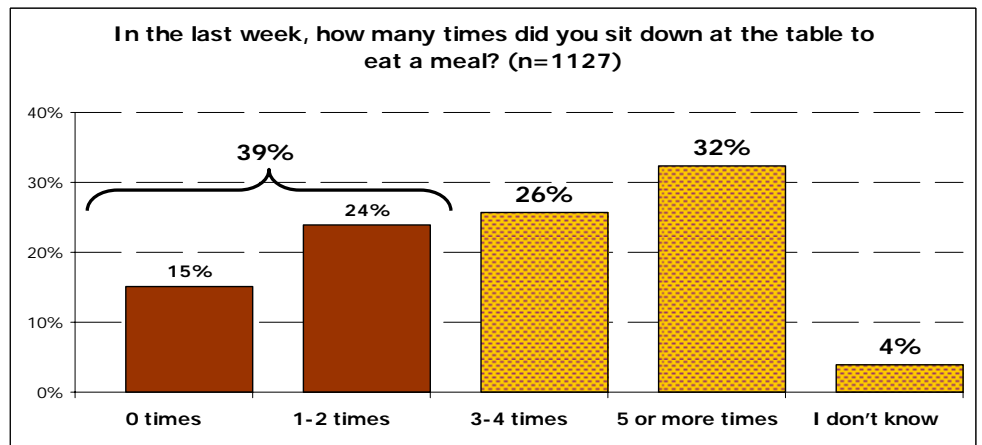
Respondents were asked to assess their consumption of high-calorie pop drinks and coffee on a weekly basis:

- The highest proportion of respondents were shown to indicate having consumed pop or coffee 5 times or more in the last week (34%)
- Alternatively, 13% indicated not having consumed pop or coffee at all in the last week



Youth were asked to indicate how many times a week they ate their meals while sitting at a table:

- Some indicated having sat at a table to eat a meal 2 times or less in the last week (39%)
- Others indicated having sat at a table to eat a meal 5 times or more in the last week (32%)

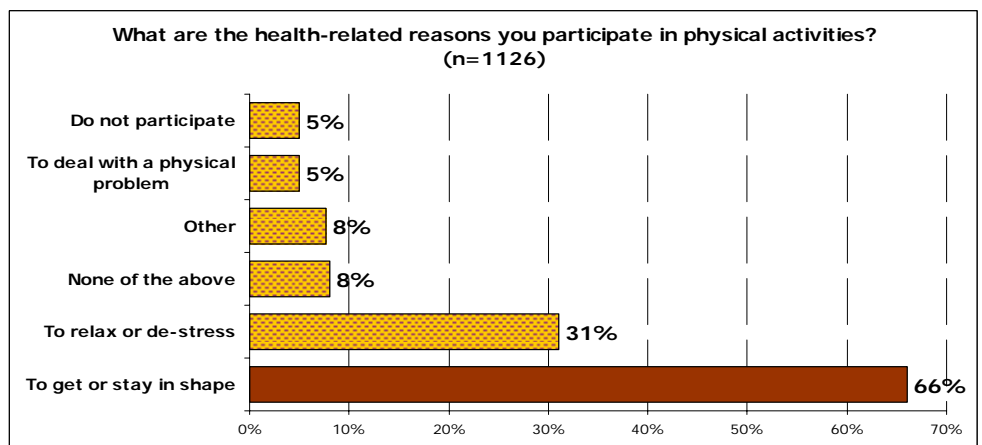


## REASONS FOR ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Numerous physical activity programs have been re-designed in schools across North America and the United Kingdom, in an effort to ignite youth interest in physical exercise. It is important to ascertain the social and health-conscious reasons youth choose to engage in physical activity in order to adequately address these reasons through exercise programming. Hire Prospects has been able to ask youth directly about the factors that contribute towards their engagement in physical activity.

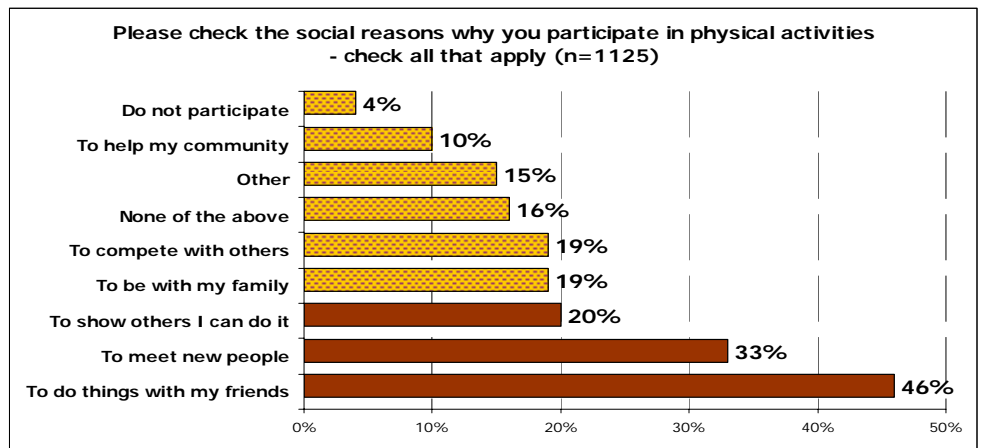
Participants were asked to indicate their health-related reasons for engaging in physical exercise:

- The majority of respondents indicated that they were driven to exercise in order get or stay in physical shape (66%)
- Others stated they were motivated to exercise for the relaxation benefits they received (31%)



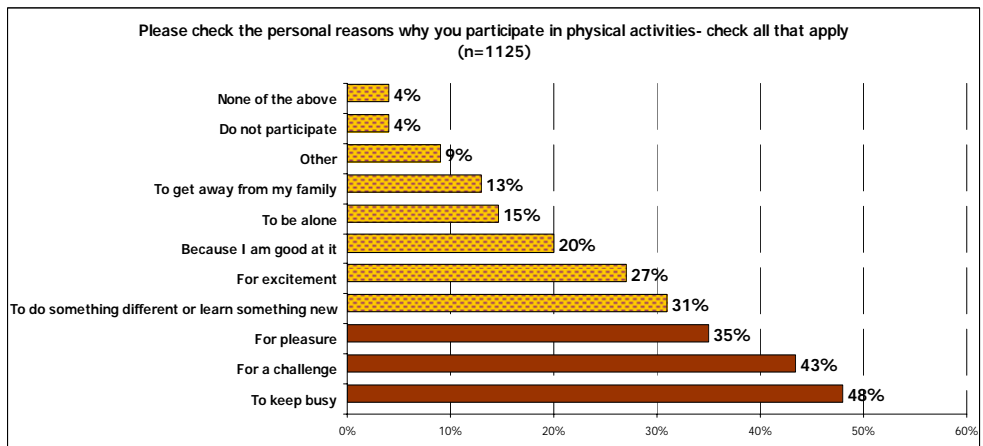
Respondents were asked to indicate social reasons for exercising. Top three social reasons for exercising were reported as follows:

- To be in the company of friends (46%)
- To meet new people (33%)
- To exhibit their athletic skill or capability (20%)



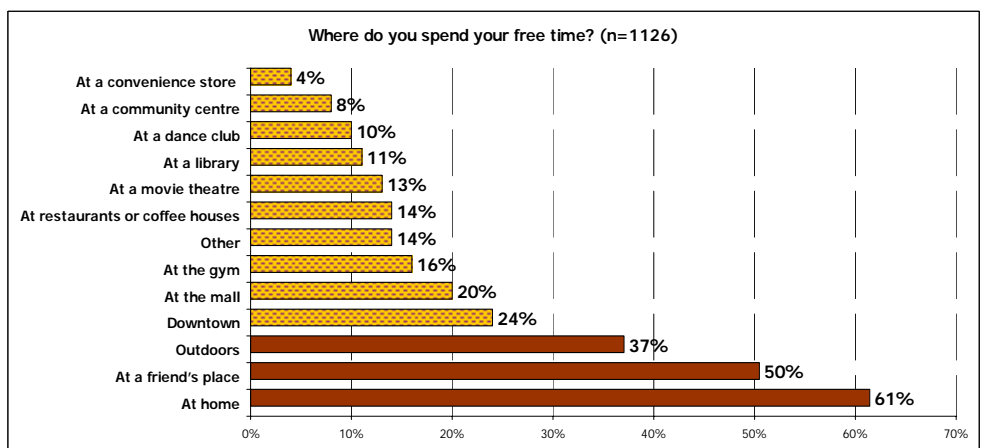
Youth were also asked to indicate their personal reasons for exercising. Top three personal reasons for exercising were reported as follows:

- To occupy their time / keep busy (48%)
- To engage in a challenge (43%)
- To increase the level of pleasure in their lives (35%)



Finally, participants were asked to indicate their current uses of free time. Top three locations where respondents spend their free time are as follows:

- At home (61%)
- At a friend's home (50%)
- Outdoors (37%)



## ABOUT HIRE PROSPECTS

Hire Prospects is the youth survey outreach service of the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres (OAYEC). Hire Prospects is used by employer associations, government agencies, non-profits, and research organizations to generate responses from youth to online surveys. Gathering the perspectives and experiences of youth from youth is a difficult feat. Hire Prospects not only engages mainstream youth, but is able to reach marginalized and 'at-risk' youth through our outreach partners, who see over 100,000 young people in multiple communities across the province every year, 25% of whom are considered to be "at-risk" youth.