

Physical Activity – Survey 1

Age Cohorts	Younger, Mid-age and Older
Surveys	Survey 1
Derived Variable	ExStat
Definition	Recreational physical activity
Source Items (Index Numbers)	EX1 (EXER-001) EX2 (EXER-002)
Statistical form	Continuous variable
Index Number	EXER-015
Derived Variable	ExGrp
Definition	Recreational physical activity
Source Items (Index Numbers)	ExStat (EXER-015)
Statistical form	Categorical variable
Index Number	EXER-018
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Source items

The first ALSWH surveys in 1996 assessed recreational physical activity with two items from the 1989 Australian Risk Factor Prevalence Study.¹

EX1: In a NORMAL week, how many times do you engage in VIGOROUS exercise lasting for 20 minutes or more? (exercise which makes you breathe harder or puff and pant, such as netball, squash, jogging, aerobics, vigorous swimming, etc.)

EX2: In a NORMAL week, how many times do you engage in LESS VIGOROUS exercise which lasts for 20 minutes or more? (exercise which does not make you breathe harder or puff and pant, like walking, gardening, swimming and lawn bowls)

Code	Re-code	Response
1	0	Never
2	1	Once a week
3	2.5	Two or three times a week
4	5	Four, five or six times a week
5	7	Once every day
6	10	More than once every day

Derived Variables

Data are re-coded to estimate the number of times per week each type of activity is undertaken; mostly the mid-point of the response categories. A recreational physical activity variable (ExStat.) is calculated as the weighted sum of the re-coded values for EX1 and EX2.

$$\text{ExStat} = (5 * \text{EX1Weight}) + (3 * \text{EX2Weight})$$

Exstat has a theoretical range of 0 to 80. This variable has no units of measurement and is not comparable in any way with measures used in later phases of the study.

Categories

The resulting scores are categorised as shown. A score of 15 is equivalent to the US national physical activity guidelines in 1996² of 5 bouts of moderate activity per week, or 3 bouts of vigorous activity, or any combination of the two.³ The categorical variable is named ExGrp in ALSWH datasets.

Code	Score	Category - Activity Equivalent
1	<5	None or very low <i>No activity or moderate activity once per week</i>
2	5-<15	Low to Moderate <i>Moderate activity 2-4 times or vigorous activity 1-2 times per week or equivalent combination</i>
3	15-<25	Moderate to High <i>Moderate activity 5-8 times or vigorous activity 3-5 times per week or equivalent combination</i>
4	25-<40	High <i>Moderate activity 8-13 times or vigorous activity 5-8 times per week or equivalent combination</i>
5	40+	Very High <i>Vigorous activity more than 8 times per week or equivalent moderate activity</i>

References

1. Risk Factor Prevalence Study Management Committee. *Risk Factor Prevalence Study 3, 1989*. Canberra, Australia. National Health Foundation of Australia and Australian Institute of Health, 1990
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical activity and health: A report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC; 1996
3. Brown WJ, Mishra G, Lee C, Bauman A. Leisure time physical activity in Australian women: relationship with well-being and symptoms. *Research Quarterly in Exercise and Sport* 2000;71:206-16