

# Physical Activity Pattern of Male College Students in Chennai

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## Abstract

**Background:** As per the saying ‘Health is wealth’, physical activity plays a vital role in improving and maintaining individuals, physical, mental and social wellbeing. Physical activity among the students is significant since they are the future pillars of the nations.

**Aim:** To study the physical activity pattern of the male college students in Chennai

**Methods and Tools:** 500 male students from Arts and Sciences college in Chennai were randomly selected for the study. Using an interview schedule, the physical activity pattern of the subjects like type, frequency, duration of physical activity were determined. Reasons and barriers to physical activity were also studied.

**Results:** only 41.4% of subjects performed physical activity regularly - the majority of the students engaged in walking and gym activities. Most of the students showed physical activity for 0-2 days per week. Fitness and enjoyment were the reasons mentioned for performing physical activity. Lack of time was reported to be the barrier for performing the physical activity by the study group.

**Conclusion:** Students must spend more time on physical activity both on- campus and off- college for well- being of health, to de-stress themselves, to maintain the social relationship. This may enhance the effectiveness of studying and thus improve student performance.

**Keywords:** Physical activity, Barriers, Fitness, BMI

## Introduction

“Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require expenditure” can be defined as Physical activity. Physical inactivity or being sedentary is a fourth leading risk factor for global mortality and is a major contributing factor for various non-communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, cancer and heart diseases.

With increasing affluence and a dramatic increase in TV watching and laptop usage documented in India, it is more likely to observe more sedentary habits among adolescents. The world is facing an epidemic of non-communicable diseases, and lack of physical activity is a significant risk factor for these diseases. It is expected that the lack of physical activity causes 1.9 million deaths worldwide. As per WHO estimates, 80% of premature heart diseases, as well as the incidence of diabetes, could be well prevented by a strategy of combined healthy diet, physical activity and avoidance of tobacco. Since students are the pillars of the future nation, it is essential to for the youngsters to perform physical activity for the sake of physical, emotional and mental health.

## Primary Objectives

The main objective of the research is to study the physical activity pattern of college students

## Secondary Objective

To understand the Frequency, duration, reasons and barriers for performing physical activity

## Review of Literature

The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) recommends at least thirty minutes of moderate physical activity or brisk walking at least for five days in a week for adults (one hundred and fifty minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week). According to the World Health Organization, Indian Council of Medical Research, Non-communicable Diseases Risk Factor surveillance 2003-2004, the rates of job-related physical activity of moderate and vigorous intensity in urban, slum and rural population were 35.8%, 55.2% and 61%, respectively, whereas rates of leisure-time, moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity physical activity were 15.6%, 12.1% and 14%, respectively. A WHO study suggested that participation in physical activities of adolescent and young adults improves their lifestyle on a regular basis. A significant public health problem is Physical inactivity in the twenty-first century. It is necessary to create awareness among students right from the beginning.

Increase in sedentary lifestyle or low physical activity has also been reported from Ontario, United States and states of India including Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh in India. In accordance to research carried out in Brazil and Taiwan, young males are more likely to be physically active. This trend also shows a probable decrease in physical activity as they proceed from adolescence to adulthood, especially between 15-23 years of age. This may be related to a lack of self-motivation and becoming less complaint to health advice. In contrast, students with excellent and shared knowledge regarding cardiovascular diseases were physically active. Based on such observation, it is reasonable to hypothesise that adolescents who are well-informed of the negative health aspects which may occur due to physical inactivity may be more motivated to be physically active.

## Methodology

The type of research used in the present study is a descriptive type. Adopting stratified sampling and

simple random sampling methods, about 500 male students in the age group of 19-22 years randomly selected from two Government colleges and one Government- aided Arts and Science colleges of North Chennai, India. Ethical clearance was obtained from the universal ethics board to conduct the study. Permission for from college authorities was also obtained. The students were briefed about the purpose of the research and written Consent from the students to participate in the study was received. The study was conducted for six months.

The pre-tested Interview schedule was applied to collect information regarding the physical activity pattern of the subjects. The interview schedule consists of physical activity pattern, frequency and duration of physical activity, barriers and reasons for performing physical activity. A pilot study was conducted among one-tenth of the total population to check the reliability and validity of the interview schedule. The obtained data were coded, and it was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS version 20.0.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1 Physical activity**

Physical Activity	Number	Percentage
Yes	207	41.4
No	293	58.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

It was evident from the table that only 41.4% perform physical activity. Who reported that around 60% of the global population does not regularly meet the recommended daily minimum physical activity. A crude measure of global physical inactivity remained at 21.4% with that of women at 23.7% and men at 18.9% 3.

**Table 2 Type of Physical activity**

Type of physical activity	Number	Percentage
Walking	71	34.3
Jogging	25	12.1
Running	0	0
Aerobic exercise	14	6.8
Yoga	19	9.2
Swimming	16	7.7
Gym	62	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

Among the study participants who performed physical activity, walking is played by more number of the participants (34.3%), followed by gym by 30%. Jogging and yoga are carried out by 12.1% and 9.2% participants respectively. Aerobic exercise is performed by 6.8% of participants, and swimming is completed by 7.7 % participants, and none of the participants performed running.

A study conducted by **Jagadeesan et al. (2017)** showed that Students with healthy BMI were undertaking regular physical activities. Among them, 48.7% of them performed jogging and brisk walking for 30 minutes.

**Table 3 Frequency of physical activity**

Frequency of Physical activity	Number	Percentage
0-2 days per week	103	49.8
3-4 days per week	68	32.9
5 or more days a week	36	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

When the frequency of the physical activity is assessed, it is revealed from the above table that about 49.8% perform physical activity for 0-2 days in a week, followed by 32.9% and 17.4% for 3-4 days per week and 5 or more times a week respectively.

**Table 4 Duration of physical activity**

Duration of physical activity	Number	Percentage
10-20 minutes per day	6	2.9
30 minutes per day	139	67.1
45 minutes per day	27	13
One hour per day	35	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

In the present study, most of the participants (67.1%) performed physical activity or exercises for an average of 30 minutes every day, followed by 16.9% and 13% for one hour and 45 minutes respectively. It is evident that only 2.9% performed physical activity for 10 to 20 minutes a day. A study conducted by Baseer Md (2015) showed that only 38.3% of students walk at least 30 minutes and performed exercise daily.

**Table 5 Reasons for physical activity**

Reasons for physical activity	Number	Percentage
Weight loss	38	18.4
Stress relief	35	16.9
Enjoyment	86	41.5
Fitness	48	23.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

When the reasons for the physical activity were analysed, it was revealed that about 41.5% reported enjoyment as a reason for performing physical activity, followed by 23.2% and 18.4% stated fitness and weight loss respectively and only 16.9% reported stress relief as the reasons for carrying out physical activity. According to **Kamal (2014)**, Physical activity improves the quality of people who are physically fit and feel better and feel energetic during the day and reduce insomnia. The study also proved that being physically active student's academic performance could improve 5.

**Table 6 Barriers to physical activity**

Barriers to physical activity	Number	Percentage
Lack of time	160	32
Lack of motivation	83	16.6
Lack of will power	82	16.4
Lack of interest	55	11
Lack of energy	62	12.4
Not in mood	58	11.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>100</b>

About 32% study population mentioned lack of time as the barrier for performing physical activity. About 16.6% and 16.4% reported lack of motivation and lack of will power, respectively, for not performing physical activity. Moreover, 11% and 12.4% reported lack of interest and lack of energy respectively, and about 11.6% reported as not in the mood to take part in any form of physical activity. Similar to our study, it was observed that the practice of exercise lacked among students, which aggravates their health condition. The reason behind this was the lack of time.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that physical activity is essential for a healthy and productive lifestyle. Our

study reported only 41.4 % performed physical activity. Enjoyment and fitness were significant reasons detailed for physical activity. Lack of time is the major hindrance for performing physical activity. Students must spend more time on physical activity both on- campus and off- college for well- being of health, to de-stress themselves, to maintain the social relationship. This may enhance the effectiveness of studying and thus improve student performance. Parents, college authorities and Government, should insist the students take part in the physical activity for the well being of the individual as well nation.

### Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size is minimum
2. Only male gender selected for the study
3. The study focused only on Arts and Science college students
4. Only the North Chennai area is chosen for the study

### Recommendations for Future Research

1. Comparative study between male and female students can be done
2. Physical activity pattern of engineering and medical students can be compared with Arts and Science college students
3. Education can be focused on other parts of Tamil Nadu

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