

WELLNESS SERIES: UNDERGRADUATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical Activity

Students were asked to report how often they engaged in certain kinds of physical activity per week. The participants indicated the number of days per week they engaged in the following types of physical activity: 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity (e.g. walking briskly, biking, light weight lifting), 20 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic exercise (e.g. running), and 8-10 repetitions of strength training exercise (e.g. resistance weight machines).

To determine a threshold for “healthy” physical activity, we referred to the American Heart Association’s (AHA) guidelines. The American Heart Association recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week, vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes three times a week and muscle strengthening exercise two days a week.

Table 1. Meeting Weekly Exercise Recommended by American Heart Association

	Meets AHA Recommendation	Average Days
Moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes (5+ days)	35%	3.4
Vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes (3+ days)	37%	2.0
Exercise to strengthen muscles (2+ days)	37%	1.4

Overall, about a third of students met the American Heart Association’s recommended weekly physical activity recommendations. When looking at average days per week engaged in exercise across all categories, the average number of days respondents exercised did not meet the minimum AHA standards (see Table 1).

Comparison by Gender

There were significant differences by gender across all exercise types (see Table 2). Females were significantly more likely than males to report engaging in 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity such as walking briskly, biking, and light weight lifting ($p < .05$).

In contrast, males were significantly more likely than females to report engaging in vigorous intensity aerobic exercise such as running for at least 20 minutes per day ($p < .01$). Furthermore, males were also more likely than females to engage in 8-10 repetitions of strength training exercises such as resistance weight machines ($p < .01$).

Table 2. Gender Comparison of Meeting Weekly Exercise Recommended by American Heart Association

	% Meets AHA Recommendation		Average Days	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes (5+ days)	35%	33%	3.4*	3.3*
Vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes (3+ days)	35%	39%	1.9**	2.1**
Exercise to strengthen muscles (2+ days)	29%	49%	1.1**	2.0**

Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

When looking at the breakdown by race/ethnicity across all three exercise types, we find that Whites met the AHA recommendation at a higher rate for moderate (e.g. walking briskly, biking, light weight lifting) and vigorous exercise (e.g. running). International students did so for strengthen training exercise such as muscle strengthening (See Table 3). Respondents identifying as International students met the AHA recommendation for moderate exercise the least. Similarly, Asian respondents indicated meeting the AHA recommendation for vigorous exercise the least while URM respondents met the muscle strengthening the least.

When looking at average days per week engaged in exercise across all categories, the average number of days respondents exercised did not meet the minimum AHA standards. Looking at each group under moderate exercise, there were significant differences amongst Asian, International and White students when compared to all respondents at the $p < .01$ level (See Table 3).. Significant differences also arose under vigorous exercise when comparing Asian and White respondents to all respondents at the $p < .01$ level.

Table 3. Race/Ethnicity Comparison of Meeting Weekly Exercise Recommended by American Heart Association

	Moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes (5+ days)		Vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes (3+ days)		Exercise to strengthen muscles (2+ days)	
	% Meets AHA Recommendation	Average Days	% Meets AHA Recommendation	Average Days	% Meets AHA Recommendation	Average Days
All	34.3%	3.4	36.5%	2.0	36.7%	1.4
Asian	31.2%	3.1*	33.1%	1.8**	34.9%	1.4
International	22.5%	2.8**	38.0%	2.0	39.9%	1.6
URM	30.5%	3.2	34.1%	1.9	33.3%	1.3
White	43.2%	3.8**	41.1%	2.3**	39.7%	1.5

Exercise on Campus

Survey participants who reported engaging in any form of physical activity were asked if these activities occurred at UCLA none, some, or all/almost all the time (three point scale). Even though students report engaging in moderate, vigorous, and strengthening exercise at about the same frequency, they utilize UCLA facilities most often for moderate exercise and least often for muscle strengthening. Still, it appears that UCLA is a common place for students to go to exercise (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Exercise at UCLA Campus Facilities

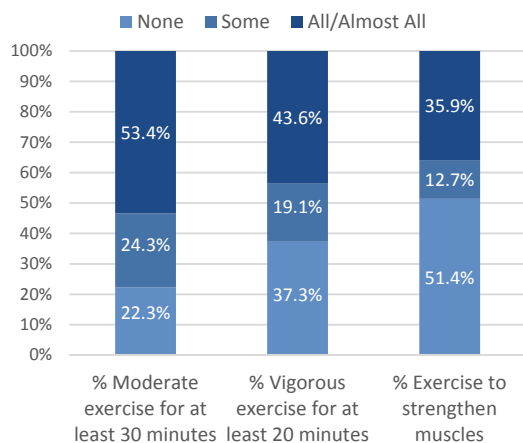
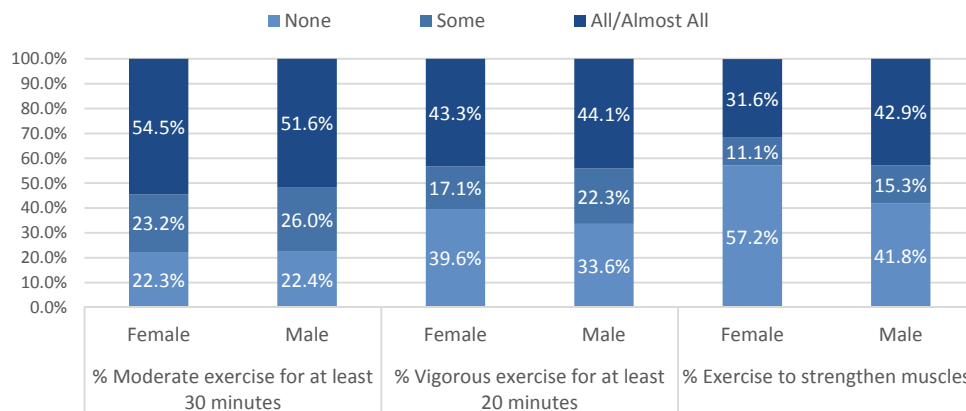


Figure 2. Gender Comparison of Exercise at UCLA Campus Facilities



Comparison by Gender

Males were more likely to engage in vigorous and muscle strengthening activities on the UCLA campus compared to females (see Figure 2). Female and males on average indicated their use for vigorous exercise at some of the time; however, comparing their means highlights a significant gender difference at the $p < .01$ level (See Table 4).

Table 4. Gender Mean Comparison of Exercise at UCLA Campus Facilities

	Female	Male
Moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes	2.3	2.3
Vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes	2.0**	2.1**
Exercise to strengthen muscles	1.7**	2.0**

In the same way, men rated their use for muscle strengthening at some of the time significantly higher than the female average of 1.7, between none and some of the time. Gender differences for this type of activity was significant at the $p < .01$ level. There were no significant differences with the use of UCLA campus facilities in regards to moderate exercise.

Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

Comparing utilization of UCLA Facilities, International students were less likely to use the facilities for moderate exercise. URM students were less likely to use for vigorous exercise ($p < 0.01$) and strengthening muscles ($p < 0.05$). White students were more likely to use the UCLA facilities for vigorous exercise ($p < 0.05$) and strengthening muscles ($p < 0.05$).

Note: UCUES 2014 data was used for this brief. Analysis of the data primarily included frequencies and descriptive statistics. To understand group differences by gender and race/ethnicity, we conducted t-tests. The average for each race/ethnicity was compared to the overall average in order to determine if the average of each group (Asian, International, URM, and White) differed respective to the overall mean. Significance was calculated and reported as follows: one asterisk (*) $p < 0.05$, two asterisks (**) $p < 0.01$.

For accompanying information including participant demographics, survey methodology, and additional undergraduate wellness series briefs, please visit:

<http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/2014-Wellness>.

Table 5. Race/Ethnicity Mean Comparison of Exercise at UCLA Campus Facilities

	All	Asian	International	URM	White
Moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes	2.3	2.3	2.1**	2.3	2.3
Vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0**	2.2*
Exercise to strengthen muscles	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8*	1.9*

Figure 3. Race/Ethnicity Comparison of Exercise at UCLA Campus Facilities

