

Cycling for physical activity

Cycling is a popular physical activity which is suitable for people of all ages. It can be undertaken as a form of exercise or for transport.

Cycling has a wide range of health, environmental, social and economic benefits and it has an important role in increasing physical activity levels. Due to this, many strategies and programs aim to increase participation in cycling.

There are many types of cycling including mountain biking, road cycling, track cycling and BMX.

PARTICIPATION IN CYCLING

Participation of people aged 15 years and over¹

In 2006, 133,600 (8.6%) Western Australians aged 15 years and over participated in cycling in the past year. The participation rate was higher for males (12.1%) than females (5.1%).

Participation in cycling: Western Australians aged 15 years and over – 2006 (a)

	Males	Females	Total
Number	93,300	40,300	133,600
Proportion (%)	12.1	5.1	8.6

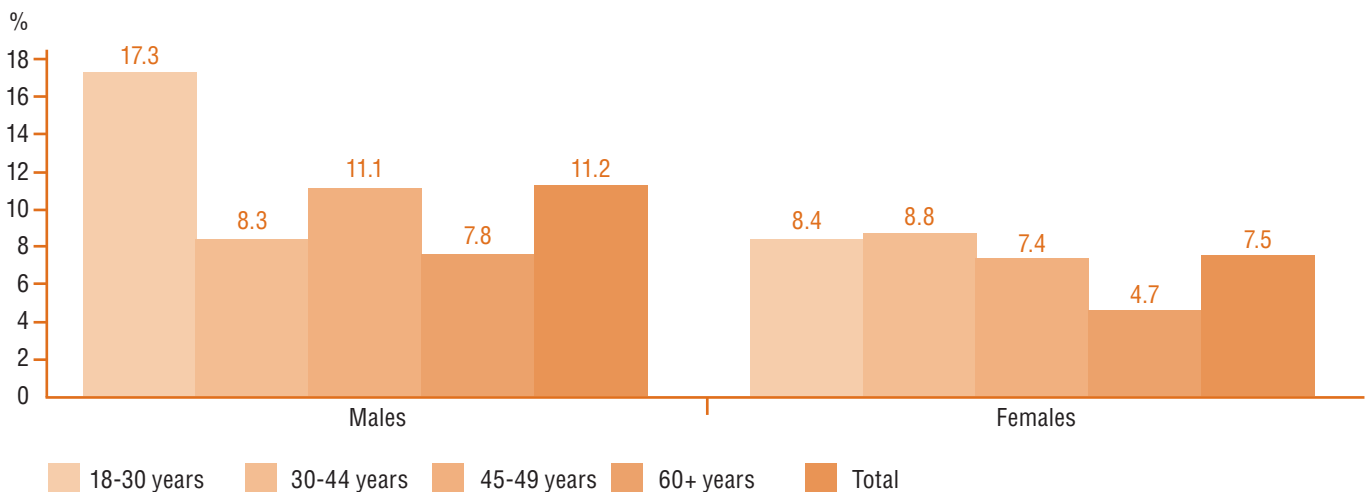
PARTICIPATION OF ADULTS AGED 18 YEARS AND OVER

Cycling for recreation²

In 2006, 9.3% of Western Australians aged 18 years and over cycled for recreation in the week prior to survey. The participation rate was higher for males (11.2%) than females (7.5%).

The groups most likely to have cycled for recreation were males aged 18–30 years (17.3%), males aged 45–49 years (11.1%) and females aged 30–44 years (8.8%).

Participation in cycling for recreation by age and sex: Western Australians aged 18 years and over – 2006



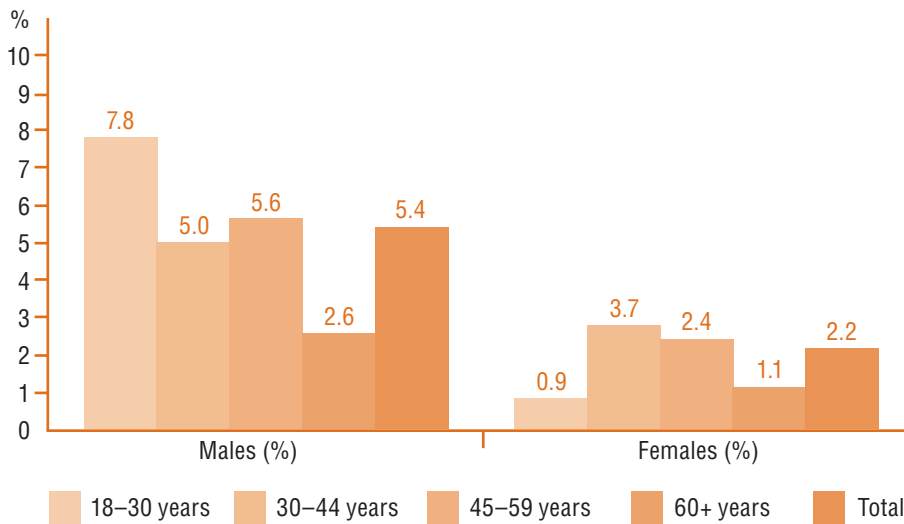
Changes over time³

The proportion of Western Australians aged 18 years and over who cycled for recreation was similar in 1999, 2002 and 2006 (9%, 8% and 9% respectively).

Cycling for transport⁴

In 2006, 3.8% of Western Australians aged 18 years and over cycled for transport in the week prior to survey. The participation rate was higher for males (5.4%) than females (2.2%).

Participation in cycling for transport by age and sex: Western Australians aged 18 years and over – 2006



Incidental physical activity⁵

Western Australians are encouraged to incorporate physical activity into their daily activities or chores as all activity is beneficial to health. One type of incidental activity is cycling as a form of transport.

In 2006, 57.4% of Western Australians walked/ cycled to their destination instead of a five-minute drive. The proportion was higher for females (61.0%) than males (53.8%).

Every day, residents in metropolitan Perth make more than 250,000 private car trips that are less than one kilometre, and our dependence on the motor vehicle is increasing.⁶ Up to half of all car trips can be easily replaced by walking, cycling or public transport.⁷

Facilities used for physical activity⁸

Cycling is commonly undertaken on streets/footpaths or cycle/walk paths.

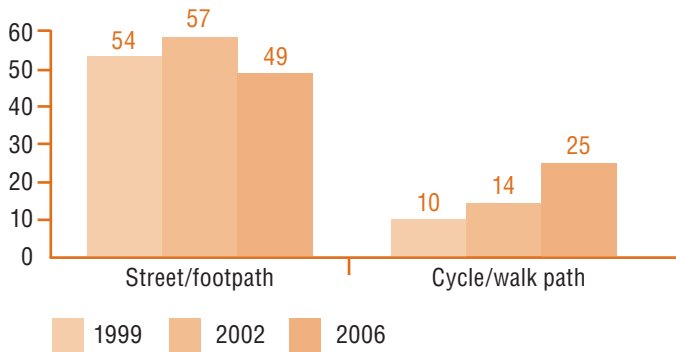
In 2006, local streets and footpaths were the most frequently used facilities for physical activity. Females were more likely than males to have used cycle/ walk paths for physical activity.

Facilities used for physical activity: Western Australians aged 18 years and over –2006

Facility	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Street/footpath	48.1	49.1	49
Home	45.1	50.2	48
Cycle/walk path	22.7	26.6	25
Gym	19.1	24.8	22
Public park	18.6	17.5	18

Between 1999 and 2006, the proportion of adults using cycle/ walk paths has increased from 10% to 25%.

Facilities used for physical activity: Western Australians aged 18 years and over – 1999, 2002, 2006

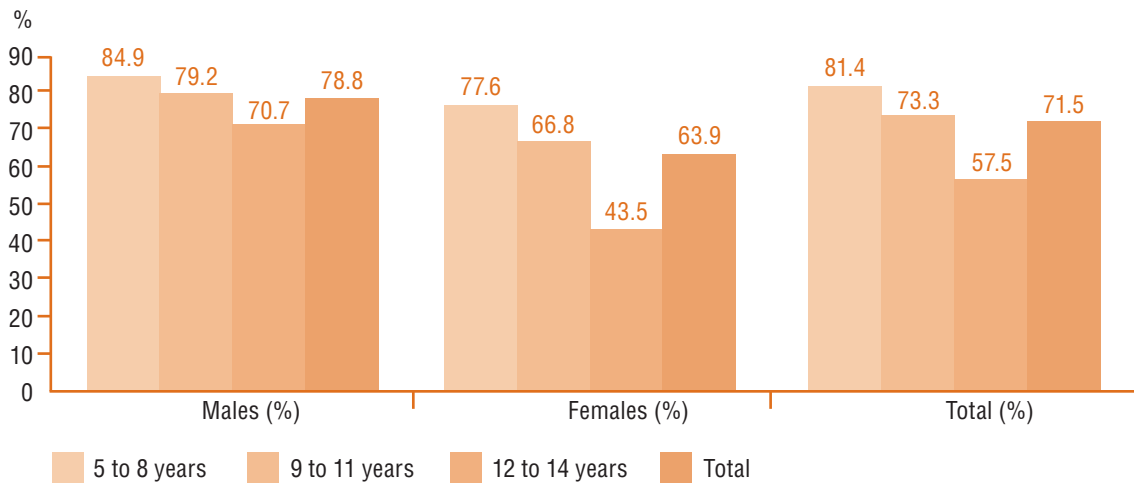


Children’s participation in bike riding⁹

In 2006, 71.5% of children aged 5-14 years participated in bike riding in the past 12 months. The proportion was higher for males (78.8%) than females (63.9%).

The proportion of children who participated in bike riding declined with age.¹⁰

Children’s participation in bike riding by age and sex: Western Australia – 2006^(a)



(a) Proportion who participated in the 12 months to survey

CYCLING TO OR FROM SCHOOL¹¹

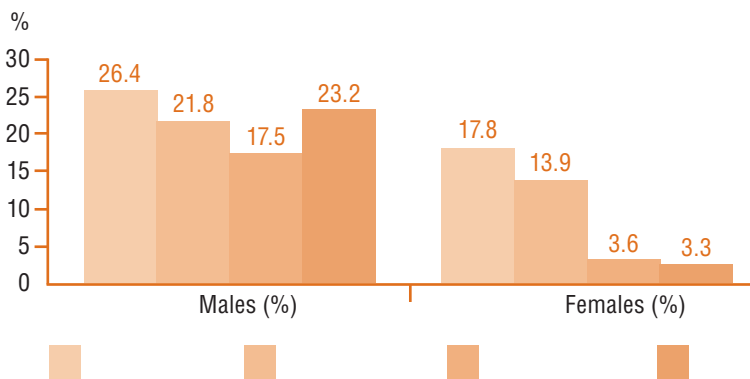
In 2003, the proportion of students who cycled to or from school was higher for females than males. For both males and females, the proportions were higher for primary than secondary school students.

Cycling to or from school: Western Australian children and adolescents – 2003

School	Males (%)	Females (%)
Primary	23.0	16.7
Secondary	19.1	3.5

In 2003, the proportion of students who cycled to school was highest among males in metropolitan primary schools followed by males in non-metropolitan secondary schools.

Cycling to or from school: Western Australian children and adolescents – 2003



Benefits of cycling^{12,13,14,15}

Benefits of cycling include:

- Improved health;
- Environmental benefits – reduced traffic congestion, reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Social benefits – independent travel, social interaction, safer road environment;
- Economic benefits – cheap travel, reduced road maintenance/ infrastructure costs; and
- Transport benefits – less pressure on roads and road systems, parking benefits.

The low-impact nature of cycling means it places very little strain on the body.¹⁶

This means it is especially good for people who are starting to get into exercise, pregnant women and people recovering from injury. Cycling also gives a great cardiovascular workout because it uses the biggest muscles in the body.

Western Australia has implemented a strategy for 'liveable neighbourhoods', which specifically aims to increase walking and cycling in the neighbourhood.¹⁷

Barriers to cycling¹⁸

Barriers to cycling include:

- Absence of cycling networks;
- Poor/ inadequate cycling networks;
- Insufficient end of trip facilities;
- Traffic;
- Threatening behaviour of other road users;
- Destination too far;
- Lack of fitness/ confidence;
- Lack of time;
- Weather conditions;
- Safety;
- Terrain;
- Not owning a bicycle; and
- Ease of driving car.

Footnotes

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2007). Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation. (Cat. no. 4177.0). Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. p28.
2. Milligan, R., McCormack, G. R., Rosenberg, M. (2007). Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2006. Results from the Adult Physical Activity Survey. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government. p32-33.
3. Ibid. p32-33.
4. Ibid. p32-33.
5. Ibid. p41.
6. Premier's Physical Activity Task Force. (2007). Walk WA: A walking strategy for Western Australia 2007 – 2020. Department of Sport and Recreation, Government of Western Australia. p2.
7. Premier's Physical Activity Task Force. Physical activity, the good, the bad the urgency. Viewed 07/05/2008. <http://www.beactive.wa.gov.au/docs/Physical%20Activity%20-%20The%20good%20the%20bad%20the%20urgency.pdf> http://www.beactive.wa.gov.au/aboutus_why.asp
8. Milligan, R., McCormack, G. R., Rosenberg, M. (2007). Physical Activity Levels of Western Australian Adults 2006. Results from the Adult Physical Activity Survey. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government. p34-35.
9. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006). Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities. (Cat. no. 4901.0), 'State Table 2 - Children Involved in Selected Activities - By States or territories; age and sex - 2006', data cube: Excel spreadsheet. Viewed 08/04/2008. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202006?OpenDocument>
10. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2006). Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities. (Cat. no. 4901.0), 'Table 5 – Children involved in selected activities - By States or territories; age and sex – 2006', data cube: Excel spreadsheet. Viewed 08/04/2008. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202006?OpenDocument>
11. Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. & Read, H. (2004). Results of Western Australian Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey 2003 (CAPANS). Physical Activity Technical Report. p55-56
12. Australian Bicycle Council. Benefits of Cycling. Viewed 29/04/2008. <http://www.austroads.com.au/abc/index.php?type=sep&id=33>
13. The State of Queensland (Queensland Transport). (2008). Cycling benefits. Viewed 29/04/2008. http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/General_information/Cycling/Benefits/
14. State Government of Victoria. Cycling – health benefits http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/pages/Cycling_health_benefits
15. Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Cycling for health, pleasure or to work. Viewed 09/05/2008. <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/cycling/1975.asp>
16. Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Cycling for health, pleasure or to work. Viewed 09/05/2008. <http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/cycling/1975.asp>
17. Western Australian Planning Commission and Department for Planning and Infrastructure. (2007). Liveable neighbourhoods: a Western Australian government sustainable cities initiative. Perth: Western Australia, State of Western Australia. Viewed 02/05/2008. <http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/Publications/1594.aspx>
18. The State of Queensland (Queensland Transport). (2008). Queensland cycle strategy. Viewed 29/04/2008. p12. http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/resources/file/eb66150bab62a27/pdf_part2_cycle_strategy_oct_2003.pdf <http://www.austroads.com.au/abc/index.php?type=sep&id=33>