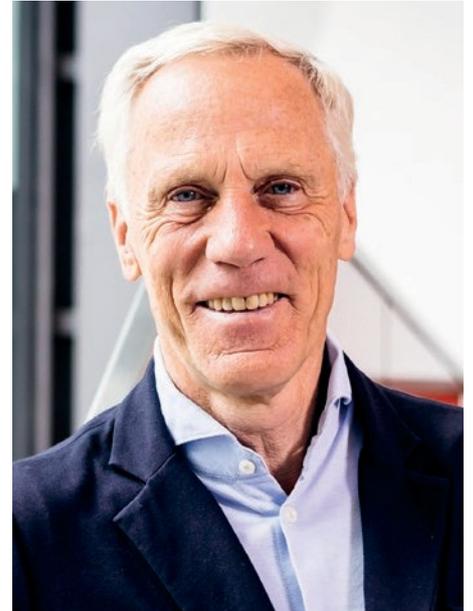


The DKV Report 2023

How healthy is Germany?

Prof. Dr. Ingo Froböse, Dr. Birgit Wallmann-Sperlich





Dear ,

This year, I am pleased that we can shed light on another incredibly important aspect of exercise behavior for you - muscle training!

We humans have over 650 muscles, which are the assets of our body. They are the largest metabolic organ in our organism, burn nutrients and generate energy, produce messenger substances, keep us upright and enable us to move. These are just six reasons why we should look after them. In this , taking care of them means exercising, at least two days a week according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization. Regular muscle training can reduce the risk of many chronic lifestyle diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and various cancers and musculoskeletal diseases.

However, judging by the results of our survey, only 40 percent of respondents do so, with the youngest respondent group exercising more frequently than the oldest. But the latter group in particular can benefit incredibly from muscle training, because from the age of 30, if we don't train them sufficiently, our muscles go downhill. With structured muscle training, we can work against this and in this way even build up a protective factor against the need for care in old age. Exercises using your own body weight can help here.

Basically, the results in relation to exercise always give me pause for thought - sedentary (sitting) behavior is constantly increasing in our everyday lives, we are stuck in the area of physical activity and muscle training is still far too little anchored in our minds. We have to do something, because I keep coming to the same conclusion: Exercise in everyday life and structured endurance and muscle training are one of the most valuable and effective strategies against various illnesses. And just as importantly, they increase our enjoyment and satisfaction with life. We therefore need to redesign our living environments so that exercise becomes an everyday routine and sport for young and old - in all its diversity - once again takes its place at the heart of our society.

I am delighted that we were once again able to produce this report together with Deutsche Krankenversicherung (DKV). It provides important impetus for the social debate that we must face together and obliges us to act! In view of the increase in lifestyle-related illnesses, we now clearly recognize that we urgently need comprehensive preventive services. Without this, we as a society are heading straight for a health and socio-economic crisis at the beginning of the next few decades.

Prof. Dr. Ingo Froböse wishes an enjoyable

read
German Sport University Cologne



Dear ,

How healthy is Germany? We have been investigating this question for the seventh time since 2010.

A look at the DKV Report 2023 reveals a normalization after the corona period and that some things are for the better in terms of health. On the other hand, a worrying trend is continuing: Germans are increasingly stuck to their chairs, armchairs and sofas.

According to this year's survey, Germans sit for an average of 554 minutes, i.e. over 9 hours per working day. What even more worrying is that respondents aged 18 to 29 once again exceed this high figure: at 621 minutes, i.e. over 10 hours, they hold the negative record all age groups.

As a health insurer, we see the long-term consequences a sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercise and lack of muscle training. The risk of cardiovascular disease and even the need for care in old age increases with a lack of exercise. The mortality risk for sedentary people with little physical activity - and this applies to one in ten of those surveyed - is substantially higher than for those who are less active.

The psyche also suffers. A quarter of those surveyed do not feel subjectively. Although there are many reasons for this, the report shows that there a connection between sufficient exercise and subjective well-being. Everyone needs time to regenerate and take a deep breath.

My suggestion at the end: add the following tomorrow

Make "active breaks" a fixed date in your calendar. Hold conversations while standing or walking, do exercises to compensate for physically strenuous or one-sided strain and take the stairs instead of the elevator from time to time, change your position and perspective. And in your free time: moving, get some fresh air, discover your surroundings and nature.

Dr. Clemens Muth Chairman of the
Executive Board of
DKV Deutsche Krankenversicherung AG



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 the highest standards of service to the Company's customers. Failure to comply with the
 standards of the Company will result in (punishment for not complying with the
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1 Methodology

1.1 Study design

"How healthy is Germany?" Since 2010, this has been the regular topic of the DKV Report, a representative survey on the individual health behavior of German citizens. On behalf of DKV, the Institute for Exercise Therapy and Movement-oriented Prevention and Rehabilitation at the German Sport University Cologne (DSHS), in cooperation with the Institute for Sports Science at the Julius-Maximilians University of Würzburg, once again conducted and evaluated the survey. This seventh edition of the DKV Report is similar to its predecessors in terms of the time of year, the questions asked and the survey procedure. This makes trends and changes in the health behavior of the respondents visible.

Between February 13 and March 16, 2023, the opinion research institute Ipsos surveyed a total of 2,800 residents in Germany as part of a guided and computer-assisted telephone interview on the following health areas:

- Subjective state of health
- Physical activity at work to get to places (transportation) and during leisure time
- Nutritional behavior
- Alcohol and nicotine consumption
- Dealing with stress

Since 2014/2015, every DKV report "How healthy is Germany?" has been keeping an eye on the amount of time spent sitting in different areas of German citizens' lives. This is important because, from a health perspective, it is not only important to record moderate-intensity exercise per day or week, but also how everyday life is spent beyond this - from a physical behavior perspective. A new addition in this edition is the topic of "breathing".

Other focal points in the seventh edition of the Health Report are:

- Subjective well-being, recovery experience and break behavior
- Muscle-strengthening activities

Special notes:

In the DKV Report, the masculine form is used for general personal designations to improve comprehensibility and readability. For reasons of better readability, the masculine form is used for personal designations and personal nouns. In the interests of equal treatment, the corresponding terms apply to all genders. The abbreviated language form is for editorial reasons only and does not imply any judgment.

In the description of statistical distributions, rounded percentage values are shown without decimal places.

In individual cases, there may be small deviations in the totals (e.g. 99/101 percent instead of 100 percent).

1.2 Sample design

A total of 2,800 German citizens aged 18 and over took part in the approximately 20-minute survey. As in previous years, an adjustment weighting was made according to gender and age as well as the characteristics of the federal state and size of town. The aim is for the weighting factors to adjust the distribution of the sample to the requirements of the overall population. All information on the sample and weighting is based on the ADM sampling frame for telephone surveys (www.adm-ev.de/leistungen/arbeitsgemeinschaft-adm-stichproben).

The analysis of the survey results was carried out with the aid of the data processing program SPSS© for Windows (29.0) from IBM Corporation.

As before, at least 200 interviews were conducted in each federal state. The federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland as well as Lower Saxony and Bremen were analyzed together, as the sample base would be too small if they were considered individually.

Calculation of the benchmarks for "healthy lifestyle" As in previous years, the DKV Report is based on known "test benchmarks" in order to be able to make statements about health behavior. To this end, the benchmark for the 2021 report was adapted to the updated activity recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) from 2020.¹ The benchmarks enable a comparison of the years 2010 to 2023 in the following categories for a healthy lifestyle:

- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Perception of stress

A person achieves an all-round healthy lifestyle if all benchmarks in the five areas mentioned are met.

Benchmark definitions:

Physical activity

The benchmark is met if the respondent achieves > 1,200 MET minutes per week across all areas of activity (work, transportation, leisure). This benchmark is based on the WHO's international activity recommendations for endurance-oriented exercise for adults published at the end of 2020 in order to achieve additional health benefits⁽¹⁾.

The international exercise recommendations have been updated in some respects based on the newly available evidence^{1,2} and were taken into account in the last survey in 2021. For example, a range of 600 to 1,200 MET minutes is currently defined as the minimum recommended endurance-oriented physical activity range. Three categories of physical activity are presented in the report:

Category 1: Inactive

< 600 MET minutes per week (insufficient exercise)

Category 2: Minimalists

600-1,200 MET minutes per week (corridor of minimum activity recommendations)

Category 3: Active

> 1,200 MET minutes per week (recommendations for additional health benefits - benchmark met)

The activity benchmarks of the previous DKV reports were also adapted in 2021 to the current WHO physical activity recommendations from November 2020. This ensures comparability across all surveys conducted to date. Possible future trends in activity levels can also be derived over a longer time axis.

Nutrition

Ten questions were asked about nutrition, based on the recommendations of the German Nutrition Society (DGE), with predefined answer options. However, this is not a dietary protocol that records exact quantities, but more general questions that take into account the quality and weekly quantity of dietary behavior. The distribution of nutrition points is based on the DGE recommendations. A healthy eating benchmark is achieved when 20 or more points out of a possible total of 30 are scored.

Smoking

This benchmark is achieved as a non-smoker.

Alcohol

In order to record alcohol consumption behavior, the frequency of drinking and the quantity of alcoholic beverages consumed were surveyed. Beverages such as beer, wine, sparkling wine and spirits were recorded separately. Healthy alcohol consumption behavior is achieved when a glass of wine or beer is consumed occasionally or alcohol is abstained from altogether.

Perception of stress

The personal stress level was quantified by the question "How would you rate your current stress level?" and by a question regarding individual stress compensation mechanisms. Respondents achieve healthy stress behavior when they deal with stress using effective strategies (e.g. doing sport, exercising, practicing relaxation techniques, meeting friends, reading, listening to music, etc.) and the subjective perception of stress is low.

1.3 Investigation instruments

Both open, semi-open and closed questions were in the questionnaire. For simplified evaluation and greater objectivity, closed questions with predefined answer options were preferred to open questions. Standardized or scientifically proven instruments were for the areas of "physical activity", "sitting behavior", "subjective well-being" and "perception of recovery".

Physical activity

The standardized Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ) was used for physical activity behavior. The GPAQ is designed for national and international surveys on endurance-oriented physical activity and sufficient validity.^{3,4} Due to its implementation in different countries, this instrument enables an international comparison of activity data. The GPAQ collects information on physical activity in the following areas:

- Activity at work (paid and unpaid)
- Physical activity to reach places (active transportation by walking and cycling)
- Activity in leisure time

While the duration of intensive and moderate physical activities was recorded separately in the areas of "work" and "leisure", there are no distinctions regarding the intensity of activity in the area of transportation.

Moderate-intensity exercise includes, for example, brisk walking. Exercise with intense physical intensity includes activities that you sweat, such as jogging. In both cases, physical activity lasting ten minutes or longer is taken into account. In total, the questionnaire in the "physical activity" section comprises 15 questions. The weekly minutes of moderate and intensive activity are calculated separately by multiplying the number of days by the average duration per day. The specified minutes per week in each area are multiplied by the metabolic equivalent (MET) ("MET minutes"). Moderate activities

correspond to 4 MET, intensive activities to 8 MET. The benchmark for physical activity is reached when a total of > 1,200 MET minutes is achieved, which means that the more rigid category 3 "Active" is used (see benchmark "physical activity").

To record muscle-strengthening activities, the corresponding questionnaire of the European Health Interview Survey - Physical Activity Questionnaire (EHIS-PAQ)⁵ was used for the first time in this report. The respondents indicate on how many days of a typical week they engage in muscle-strengthening activities. The muscle-strength-oriented exercise recommendations are achieved if people engage in muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week.

Sitting behavior

The sitting times of the interviewees were also recorded in this study using the Marshall Sitting Questionnaire⁶. This questionnaire asks about the average daily sitting time in the following five areas of life, separately for workdays and weekends:

- a) during journeys from place to place (e.g. in the car, on the bus or train),
- b) during work,
- c) on television,
- d) during recreational computer or other electronic media use,
- e) during other free time (e.g. reading, going to the movies, meeting friends).

As in the previous years 2016, 2018 and 2021, this year's DKV report "How healthy is Germany?" only collected data on working day sitting times. For the evaluation, the data from the five areas of life mentioned above were added together to obtain an estimate of the average sitting time per working day. Total daily values of more than 960 minutes (16 hours) were set as "missing" to avoid strong distortions due to possible misunderstandings in the question.

* The abbreviation MET stands for metabolic equivalent. 1 MET corresponds to the energy consumption at rest (lying still) or a calorie consumption of 1 kcal per kilogram of body weight per hour. It is assumed that energy consumption during moderate physical activity is around four times higher than energy consumption at rest. Intensive physical exertion is assumed to result in an eight times higher energy expenditure. As part of the questionnaire evaluation, moderate activity is therefore calculated at 4 MET and intensive physical activity at 8 MET to MET minutes (duration in minutes x intensity in MET = MET minutes).

Well-being

The well-being of the respondents was recorded and quantified using the WHO Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) of the World Health Organization⁽⁷⁾. The respondents indicated the extent to which five statements regarding their subjective well-being in the last two weeks applied. A total value was calculated from the individual answers and by a factor of 4. This gives a percentage value ranging from 0 to 100 percentage points. A threshold value of ≤ 50 percentage points can be used to screen for depression, among other things⁽⁸⁾.

Recreational experience

The recovery experience was assessed with four items of the Recovery Experience Questionnaire (REQ)⁹, with each item belonging to one dimension (normally four items belong to one dimension). The entire REQ consists of 16 items. The questionnaire assessed how individuals recover and gain distance from work.

The four dimensions with the corresponding questions are:

- a) Mentally switching off from work (detachment) - I manage to distance myself from my work in my free time.
- b) Relaxation - in my free time, I do things that relax me.
- c) Mastery - in my free time, I do things to broaden my horizons.
- d) Control - in my free time, I decide how I spend my time.

The items were answered on a five-point Likert scale with the response "does not at all"

(1) to "strongly agree" (5). In addition, an overall REQ mean value is calculated for the four items surveyed.

Strengths and limitations

Differentiated survey of various health-relevant lifestyle factors and international comparability of the data

The present study is representative of Germany as a whole in terms of control and weighting and is by the differentiated survey of various health-relevant lifestyle factors. The survey instruments used here (e.g. GPAQ, WHO-5) are in part internationally recognized and therefore also a comparison with other countries.

Sample, survey methodology and response behavior

The response rate for this year's DKV report "How healthy is Germany?" is 4.6 percent. The statements made by the respondents are subjective assessments of their own health behavior. It should be borne in mind that the statements are influenced by a "social desirability" can be distorted.

Test separation values facilitate the assessment of the results and serve as guidelines

The calculation of benchmarks (defined test separation values) makes it possible to evaluate the results positively or negatively. Benchmarks therefore do not provide any information about the overall distribution of a characteristic in the sample that would allow a more precise assessment. The definition of benchmarks is based on the respective recommendations and opinions of the professional associations.

1 World Health Organization, WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behavior. World Health Organization: Geneva, 2020.

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8 Topp, C. W., Østergaard, S. D., Søndergaard, S., & Bech, P. (2015). The WHO-5 Well-Being Index: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 84(3), 167-176. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000376585>

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2 Healthy living in Germany

Almost two thirds of Germans feel healthy. This means that the number of people who rate their own state of health as very good or good remains stable (64% in 2023, 61% in 2021). However, only 17% achieve all the benchmarks for an all-round healthy life.

This year, 17% of Germans will again achieve all benchmarks for a healthy life (activity, diet, smoking, alcohol and stress perception). Compared to 11% in 2021, this represents a significant increase and the achievement of all benchmarks is back to the level of 2016 and 2018.

There is a positive trend in the areas of smoking and stress in particular. The number of people achieving these benchmarks has risen by 9 and 8 percentage points respectively.



2.1 The national average

Almost one in six Germans currently leads an all-round healthy life. Almost one in two fail to meet the benchmark for healthy stress management.

There are hardly any changes compared to 2021 in the areas of exercise and nutrition.

Two thirds of all respondents (67%) eat fruit and vegetables every day. 63% eat a calcium-rich diet and 42% eat wholemeal products (both daily). 12% eat meat and sausages every day, while 13% do not eat them at all. 58% eat fish or seafood once or twice a week, but a third of all Germans (33%) do not eat it at all. More than a quarter of respondents eat sweets or snacks at least once a day (26%).

In terms of activity, 72 percent fulfill the WHO's physical activity recommendations for sustained physical activity with additional health benefits.

Almost every second German (48%) reaches the stress benchmark and subjectively feels a low level of stress or uses effective strategies to leave their everyday stress behind them. This is an increase compared to 40 percent in 2021, but the pre-corona level of 57 and 58 percent is still far from being reached again. 10% feel no stress at all and around 36% experience (very) low levels of stress, although 28% experience (very) high levels.

The smoking benchmark is also achieved by significantly more respondents (currently 85 percent) than in 2021 (76 percent).

Benchmark realization

	Total
All benchmarks	17
Activity	72
Nutrition	51
Smoking	85
Alcohol	78
Stress	48

(figures in percent)

2.2 Gender comparison

Women are proportionately more likely than men to achieve the benchmark of "completely healthy", but at the same time they also feel increasingly stressed. However, they are more likely to look for ways to cope with stress.

While one in five women (20 percent) meet all the benchmarks for a healthy life, only one in seven men (14 percent) do so. This means that compared to 2021, men can (9 percent) will increase significantly, but women (2021: 14 percent) will maintain their lead.

The following gender-specific characteristics can be seen in eating habits: 77% of women eat fruit and vegetables every day, while only 56% of men say they do. Women (47%) are also more likely than men (38%) to eat wholegrain products every day. But women are also more likely to eat unhealthy snacks: almost one in three women (31%) snack on either sweets or snacks at least once a day, compared to only one in five men (20%).

Women are much more aware of alcohol consumption (88%) than men (68%). While 65% of women say they never beer, this only applies to 34% of men. As many as 79 percent of women abstain from high-proof spirits, compared to only 60 percent of men. On the other hand, women (43%) say no to sparkling wine and wine slightly less often than men (49%).

More women (32%) than men (25%) experience a high or very high level of stress, but they are more likely to use effective strategies to cope with stress. For example, 34% of the women surveyed use relaxation techniques compared to only 13% of men.

Benchmark realization by gender

Gender	Male	Female
All benchmarks	14	20
Activity	74	71
Nutrition	49	52
Smoking	84	85
Alcohol	68	88
Stress	44	52

(figures in percent)

2.3 Age comparison

People in middle adulthood (30-45 years) most frequently fail to meet the benchmarks in all five areas of life. The oldest respondents (66 years and older) clearly ahead in the areas of nutrition, smoking and stress. In contrast, the youngest age group (18-29 years) reaches the activity benchmark more often than all other age groups.

Only 10 percent of 30-45-year-olds lead an all-round healthy life. In the group aged 66 and over, almost one in four (24%) do so. The oldest respondents master the benchmark most frequently when it comes to smoking (91%) and stress (63%).

And awareness of healthy eating also increases with age: while 43 percent of 18-29-year-olds and 30-45-year-olds set the benchmark the figure for the 66 and older group is 59 percent.

Nationwide, 72% achieve the benchmark for a physically active life. The proportion is highest among young adults aged between 18 and 29 (81%). At 73%, the 46-65 age group is even more likely to achieve the activity benchmark than the oldest respondents.

The oldest respondents are the most likely to achieve the stress benchmark, with 63% compared to all other age groups. Middle-aged adults are the most likely to fall short of the stress benchmark with only 35%.

Benchmark realization by age

Age	18 to 29 years	30 to 45 years	46 to 65 years	66 years and older
All benchmarks	18	10	17	24
Activity	81	71	73	67
Nutrition	43	43	53	59
Smoking	83	80	84	91
Alcohol	71	81	79	77
Stress	45	35	48	63

(figures in percent)

2.4 By body weight

At 7 percent, obese people are the least likely to meet the benchmarks in all five areas of life.

One in five people of normal weight (BMI 18.5-24.9) achieve all the benchmarks for a healthy lifestyle (20 percent), followed by overweight respondents (BMI 25-29.9) at 17 percent. However, only 7 percent of all obese people (BMI greater than 30) lead a completely healthy lifestyle.

Only 63% of obese people achieve the WHO activity recommendations for additional health benefits. Overweight (72 percent) and normal-weight people (75 percent) are proportionately more likely to achieve the activity recommendations.

When it comes to healthy eating, normal and overweight people who reach the benchmark are close to each other (51 and 53 percent), while obese people are less likely to do so (44 percent).

There is no relevant difference between the different BMI groups when it comes to the smoking benchmark. 81 percent of people of normal weight fulfill all the criteria for a healthy approach to alcohol. Overweight (73 percent) and obese respondents (75 percent) do so to a much lesser extent.

Benchmark realization according to body weight

BMI	< 18,5*	18.5 to 24,9	25 to 29,9	≥ 30
All benchmarks	18	20	17	7
Activity	76	75	72	63
Nutrition	46	51	53	44
Smoking	74	84	86	87
Alcohol	88	81	73	75
Stress	44	52	47	34

(figures in percent)

* small base

2.5 By educational status

A good education is an influential factor for a healthy lifestyle.

Respondents with a secondary general school certificate are the most likely to fall short of the activity benchmark (64%). Respondents with an intermediate school leaving certificate (75 percent), a university entrance qualification (73 percent) or a university degree (72 percent) are more likely to achieve it.

When it comes to nutrition, high school graduates and university graduates (54 and 53 percent) score better than people with a lower secondary school leaving certificate (43 percent).

University graduates are more likely to achieve the smoking benchmark (89 percent) than respondents with a secondary leaving certificate (81 and 77 percent respectively). High school graduates are also more likely to be non-smokers (85 percent) than people with a lower secondary school leaving certificate (77 percent).

There are no differences between respondents with different educational qualifications when it comes to dealing with alcohol.

There are also few differences when it comes to the perception of stress.

Benchmark realization by educational status

Educational status	Secondary school	Intermediate maturity	Abitur, FH-Reife	Completed studies	No degree **
All benchmarks adults	15	14	19	18	3
Activity	64	75	73	72	78
Nutrition	43	47	54	53	17
Smoking	77	81	85	89	72
Alcohol	79	80	77	78	78
Stress (figures in percent)	45	51	49	46	32

** very small base

2.6 By net household income

Respondents with a lower income are less likely to eat a balanced diet and smoke more frequently than people in the highest income bracket. However, the highest income bracket is the least likely to reach the stress benchmark.

Some differences become apparent in relation to net household income. For example, only just over a third (37%) of all people with an income of less than EUR 1,500 meet the benchmark for a healthy diet. For people with incomes between EUR 1,500-2,499 net household income or EUR 2,500 and more, the figure is around one in two (48% and 51% respectively).

Only 75 percent of all low-income earners refrain from smoking. People with higher incomes are much less likely to smoke, with 85 percent reaching the benchmark.

However, the perception of stress has changed compared to the previous report. Currently, more than half of all low-income earners (52%) and 47% of middle-income earners cope well with stress. Only 39% of high earners reach this benchmark. In 2021, the income groups were much closer together at 37-40%.

Benchmark realization according to net household income***

Net household income	Until under 1.€	1,500€ to 2.€	2,500€ and more
All benchmarks adults	13	18	14
Activity	77	77	72
Nutrition	37	48	51
Smoking	75	81	85
Alcohol	81	82	76
Stress	52	47	39

(figures in percent)
*** modified basis of n= 1,524



2.7 Compared to previous years

Significantly more people are once again achieving all the benchmarks for a healthy life than during the pandemic.

After most recently reaching 11 percent in 2021 17 percent of all respondents meet all benchmarks for a healthy life. This means that they get enough exercise to not only maintain their health, but to promote it. They eat a balanced diet, abstain from nicotine and alcohol and are able to manage their stress levels well.

There is a slight upward trend in activity levels: 72% get enough exercise to a positive effect on their health. This is comparable previous years (in 2021, 69% in 2018), but a far cry from the activity level of the first survey in 2010 (83%).

No major changes are noticeable when it comes to healthy eating. Since the start of the survey in 2010, only around one in two people have paid attention to a balanced and varied diet.

The proportion of smokers in Germany continues to fall. In 2010, a quarter of Germans still picked up a cigarette, but this figure has now fallen to just 15%.

A slight downward trend can be seen when it comes to alcohol: While 82% of all respondents recently practiced a healthy approach to alcohol, this figure fell to 78% this year.

It is true that the high stress levels from the coronavirus years are declining again somewhat. But every second German still feels stressed and is unable to compensate sufficiently.

Benchmark realization in annual comparison

years	2023	2021	2018	2016	2014/ 2015	2012	2010
All benchmarks achieved	17	11	16	17	16	15	18
Activity	72	70	69	70	75	76	83
Nutrition	51	47	48	50	44	47	48
Smoking	85	76	79	78	76	77	75
Alcohol	78	82	82	85	87	84	81
Stress	48	40	57	58	52	47	49

(figures in percent)



3 Physical activity

To a large extent, the more extensive physical activity, the greater the health effect. However, only a good third of German citizens meet the combined recommendations for sufficient exercise plus muscle-strengthening activity.

If you move a lot, you are doing your body good: sufficient physical activity has a positive effect on the musculoskeletal system, the cardiovascular system, the metabolism, the immune system, the nervous system and the psyche.

A lack of exercise increases the risk of developing a number of chronic diseases - even in people who otherwise have no risk factors. For example, a lack of exercise promotes the breakdown of muscles, the development of obesity and high blood pressure, as well as the risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus and mental illness.

The WHO's endurance-oriented exercise recommendations distinguish between three categories:

Category 1: Inactive
< 600 MET minutes (insufficient exercise)

Category 2: Minimalists
600-1,200 MET minutes (corridor of minimum activity recommendations)

Category 3: Active
> 1,200 MET minutes (recommendations for additional health benefits)

This is recorded in the three areas of life: work, transportation and leisure. Physical activity during work also refers to activities that are carried out in everyday life, such as in the household, in the garden or during agricultural activities.

This year's DKV report also includes the recommendations for muscle activity for the first time. However, in order to be comparable with previous years, the physical activity benchmark is still based solely on endurance-oriented activity (> 1,200 MET minutes). To achieve the combined exercise recommendations in terms of endurance-oriented and muscle-strengthening activity, at least 600 MET minutes of endurance-oriented exercise (minimalists) and regular muscle strength training (at least twice a week) are required.

Overall, the area of endurance-oriented exercise in Germany is showing a cautious upward trend. This is encouraging, because every minute of exercise is a plus for health - every step counts.

3.1 National average

Almost three quarters of Germans are among the active population.

After years of stagnation, Germans are moving a little more for the first time: 72% (2021: 70%) of Germans are currently active, with a further 13% (2021: 11%) still getting enough exercise. The proportion of inactive people has fallen slightly to currently 14% (19% in 2021).

On a national average, 72 percent of all respondents achieve the endurance-oriented benchmark of exercise. This means that they get more than 1,200 MET minutes of exercise per week during work, transportation and leisure time.

While the active population is active to a comparable extent in all three areas of life (work 32 percent,

Proportion of respondents in the three exercise categories

	Total	Share of physical activity from the three areas of life in total activity		
		Work	Transportation	Leisure time
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	14	13	53	35
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	13	11	50	39
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	72	32	29	39

(Figures in percent, percentage mean value)

transportation 29 percent, leisure time 39 percent), physical activity during transportation dominates among minimalists and inactives, i.e. during commutes, visits or shopping (inactives 53 percent, minimalists 50 percent). Endurance-oriented activity during work, on the other hand, only for 13% among the inactive and 11% among the minimalists.

40 percent of all Germans fulfill the current recommendations for muscle-strengthening activity of twice a week. A further 11% of all respondents stated that they train their own muscles at least one day a week. However, 49 percent do not any muscle training at all.

The combined exercise recommendations of minimal endurance and muscle training are achieved by 38 percent of Germans.

Proportion of respondents achieving the recommendations for muscle activity and percentage of the population achieving the recommendations for both endurance-based exercise and muscle activity

	Total
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	40
Achieve the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (minimalists)) & strength (at least a week)	38

(figures in percent)

3.2 Gender comparison

Women and men are equally physically active. 71 percent of all women and 74 percent of all men get enough exercise to achieve additional health benefits. The gender comparison shows similar results for achieving the recommendations for muscle training (women 41%, men 39%) as well as for the combination of endurance and strength (women 39%, men 38%).

Movement categories by gender

Gender	Male	Female
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	13	16
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	13	14
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	74	71

(figures in percent)

Proportion of respondents who achieve the recommendations for muscle activity or the combined recommendations, by gender

	Male	Female
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	39	41
Achieve the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (minimum)) & strength (at least twice a week)	38	39

(figures in percent)

3.3 Age comparison

Young people are the most active.

The youngest age group reaches the activity benchmark most frequently (81%) compared to all other age groups. Among 46-65 year olds, 73% still achieve this, which is more than the 66 and older group at 67%.

Young people are also ahead in the newly recorded aspect of muscle training and the combination of endurance-oriented exercise and muscle training: almost one in two of 18-29 year old Germans (46 and 47 percent) meet the (combined) recommendations here.

Exercise categories by age group

Age	18 to 29 years	30 to 45 years	46 to 65 years	66 years and older
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	9	14	13	21
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	10	16	14	13
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	81	71	73	67

(figures in percent)

Proportion of respondents achieving the recommendations for muscle activity or the combined recommendations, by age group

	18 to 29 years	30 to 44 years	46 to 65 years	66 years and older
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	46	38	40	38
Achieve the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (minimum)) & strength (at least twice a week)	47	36	39	34

(figures in percent)

3.4 According to body weight

People with obesity are less likely to reach the activity benchmark.

Three quarters (75 percent) of all Germans of normal weight get enough exercise to achieve additional health benefits. 72 percent of people who are overweight also achieve this. Only 63 percent of people with obesity are successful in the exercise benchmark.

The gap in the recommendations for muscle training is very similar: while 44% of people of normal weight complete sufficient muscle training according to WHO criteria, only 32% of Germans with obesity and 38% of overweight respondents manage to do so. The combination of endurance and muscle activity is achieved by 42% of people of normal weight compared to 30% of people with obesity and 36% of overweight respondents.

Exercise categories according to BMI

BMI	< 18,5*	18.5 to 24,9	25 to 29,9	≥ 30
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	18	13	13	22
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	6	12	15	16
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	76	75	72	63

(figures in percent)
* Small base

Percentage of respondents who achieve the recommendations for muscle activity or the combined recommendations, by BMI

BMI	< 18,5 *	18.5 to 24,9	25 to 29,9	≥ 30
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	36	44	38	32
Achieve the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (Minimalis)) & strength (at least 2 x a week)	36	42	36	30

(figures in percent)
* Small base

3.5 By educational status

Respondents with a lower secondary school leaving certificate are the least likely to reach the activity benchmark.

People with a lower secondary school leaving certificate are less likely (64%) to reach the activity benchmark than respondents with a higher level of education. At the same time, they lead the statistics for inactivity with 24 percent.

75 percent of Germans with an intermediate school leaving certificate are active, as are 73 percent of people with a university entrance qualification and 72 percent of those with a degree.

A similar picture emerges when looking at the recommendations for muscle activity: while 41 percent of all people with an intermediate school leaving certificate and 44 percent of all high school graduates and 39 percent of university graduates strengthen their muscles sufficiently according to WHO criteria, only 33 percent of people with a secondary school leaving certificate manage to do so.

In the combination of endurance-oriented exercise and strength training, people with a high school diploma (42 percent) are also well ahead of people with a lower secondary school diploma (30 percent).

Movement categories according to educational status

Educational status	Secondary school	Intermediate maturity	Abitur, FH-Reife	Completed studies	No degree
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	24	14	15	12	14
600-1.200 MET minutes (minimalists)	13	12	13	15	8
> 1.200 MET minutes (active)	64	75	73	72	78

(figures in percent)
* Very small base

Proportion of respondents who achieve the recommendations for muscle activity or the combined recommendations, by educational status

Educational status	Secondary school	Intermediate maturity	Abitur, FH-Reife	Completed studies	No degree
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	33	41	44	39	14

Reach the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (minimalists)) & strength (at least twice a week)	30	39	42	38	14
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(figures in percent)
* Very small base

3.6 By net household income

People with high incomes are less likely to reach the benchmark activity.

Only 72 percent of high-income respondents exercise enough to achieve additional health benefits, which is less often than the

Movement categories according to net household income**

Net household income	Until under 1.€	1,500€ to 2.€	2,500€ and more
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	11	11	13
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	12	12	16
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	77	77	72

(figures in percent)

** modified basis of n= 1,669

respondents in the middle income group (77 percent). There were no differences between the income groups in terms of muscle building and endurance/strength combination.

Percentage of respondents who achieve the recommendations for muscle activity or the combined recommendations, by net household income

Net household income	Until under 1.€	1,500€ to 2.€	2,500€ and more
Achieving the recommendations for muscle activity	36	39	43
Achieve the combined recommendations for endurance (at least 600 MET minutes (minimalists)) & strength (at least twice a week)	35	38	42

(figures in percent)

3.7 Compared to previous years

Looking at the results over the past 13 years, the following picture emerges: After a stable phase between the survey years from 2016 to 2021, exercise behavior shows a minimally positive trend in 2023, is

but still far from the results of the first survey (2010:). At the same time, the group of inactive people in the current survey (14%) is slightly lower than in 2021 (19%).

Benchmark realization in annual comparison

years	2023	2021	2018	2016	2014/2015	2012	2010
< 600 MET minutes (inactive)	14	19	19	18	14	12	9
600-1,200 MET minutes (minimalists)	13	11	12	11	11	11	8
> 1,200 MET minutes (active)	72	70	69	70	75	76	83

(figures in percent)





4 Sitting times in everyday life

The Germans remain glued to their chairs, and more and more so over the years.

Studies have shown that sitting for long periods of time increases the risk of developing numerous diseases and can also shorten our life expectancy. The risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and even cancer increases. Yet it can be so simple - according to model calculations, frequent sitters can reduce their risk of dying earlier by around 20 percent if they replace one hour of sitting with walking, for example.¹

Every German sits for an average of 9.2 hours per working day in 2023. This means that sitting time increased again from 523

minutes in 2021 to the current 554 minutes, i.e. by 0.5 hours. In the last seven years, the average working day sitting time has increased continuously by more than 1.5 hours.

Note: In addition to the arithmetic mean, the median is also used as a reference value in the sitting time evaluations. It divides the average values exactly in the middle and is therefore more stable against outliers. This gives a more realistic picture of the actual sitting minutes per working day.

4.1 National average

Seat times continue to unchecked.

On average, Germans sit for just under 1 hour to get from A to B, spend a further 3.5 hours sitting at work and also spend more than 1.75 hours in front of the TV - every day. Another almost 1.5 hours are spent sitting with a computer or tablet in their free time and an additional 1.75 hours in other free time.

Sitting times in the home office and in the office

The daily sitting time is higher for respondents who work from home or both from home and in the office than for respondents who do not work from home (691 and 658 minutes respectively compared to 546 minutes).

62 percent of those surveyed stated that they work at least 8 hours per working day. In 2021, this was still 57 percent. Epidemiological studies show that the general and cardiovascular mortality risk increases more sharply above this threshold⁽²⁾.

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays on a national average

Travel from place to place (mean / median)

54 / 30

Work (mean / median)

205 / 180

Television (mean / median)

109 / 120

Computer (mean / median)

83 / 60

Leisure time (mean / median)

103 / 90



Total (mean / median)

Total: 554 / 542

(in minutes per working day)

² Patterson, R.; McNamara, E.; Tainio, M.; de Sa, T. H.; Smith, A. D.; Sharp, S. J.; Edwards, P.; Woodcock, J.; Brage, S.; Wijndaele, K. Sedentary behavior and risk of all-cause, cardiovascular and cancer mortality, and incident type 2 diabetes: a systematic review and dose response meta-analysis. Eur J Epidemiol 2018, 33, 811-829.



Health risk due to movement and sitting behavior

Scientists are currently working intensively on the health-related interaction between sitting behavior and exercise behavior. In a meta-analysis of more than one million people, this interaction was examined with regard to the risk of premature death.³ Dunstan and colleagues translated this finding into a 16-field risk matrix, the so-called SIT-ACT risk matrix.⁴ Here, the risk of death due to the sitting behavior is indicated with the help of coloring sitting and movement behavior in contrast to the reference group.

The reference is people who engage in at least moderately intensive exercise for more than 60 minutes a day during transportation and leisure time and sit for less than 4 hours. Based on this SIT-ACT risk matrix, 31 percent of our respondents showed a moderate to high increase in mortality risk compared to the reference group due to their exercise and sitting behavior.

Proportion of respondents who exhibit this daily movement and sitting behavior

	< 4 hours sitting/day	4-6 hours sitting/day	6-8 hours sitting/day	> 8 hours sitting/day
> 60 minutes/day of moderate-intensity exercise	1,8	5,4	5,9	21,0
30-60 minutes/day of moderate-intensity exercise	1,8	4,0	6,5	21,3
5-29 minutes/day of moderate-intensity exercise	0,9	3,1	3,8	12,9
< 5 minutes/day of moderate-intensity exercise	1,1	1,7	1,9	6,9

(Figures in percent, modified basis of n= 2,759)

Color legend: The coloring indicates the increased risk of death compared to the reference group (more than 60 minutes of at least moderately intensive exercise daily and less than 4 hours of sitting)^(3, 4).

Low Equivalent to the reference	Low to moderate 1-15 percent increased risk	Moderate 15-30 percent increased risk	Moderate to high 30-45 percent increased risk	High > 45 percent increased risk
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3 Ekelund, U.; Steene-Johannessen, J.; Brown, W. J.; Fagerland, M. W.; Owen, N.; Powell, K. E.; Bauman, A.; Lee, I. M., et al. Does physical activity attenuate, or even eliminate, the detrimental association of sitting time with mortality? A harmonized meta-analysis of data from more than 1 million men and women. *Lancet*, 2016, 388(10051): 1302-1310.

4 Dunstan, D. W.; Dogra, S.; Carter, S. E.; Owen, N., et al. Sit less and move more for cardiovascular health: emerging insights and opportunities. *Nat Rev Cardiol* 2021.



4.2 Gender comparison

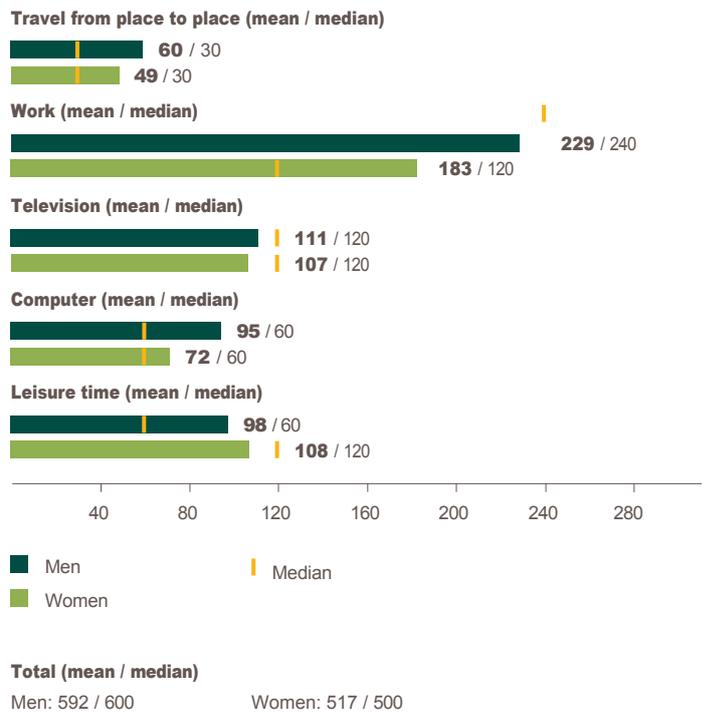
Men sit longer than women.

Male respondents are more likely (69 percent) to say that they have 8 hours a working day than female respondents (56 percent). While men spend around 10 hours a working day sitting, women spend 8.6 hours, which is 1 hour and 15 minutes less in this posture.

Men are also often ahead in the individual categories. The biggest difference is in the workplace. While men state that they spend almost 4 hours at their desk, women spend just 3 hours.

However, both genders spend a similar amount of time in front of the TV (women 107 minutes, men 111 minutes). On the other hand, men spend more than 1.5 hours in front of the computer in their free time, clearly longer than women at around 70 minutes.

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays by gender



(in minutes per working day)

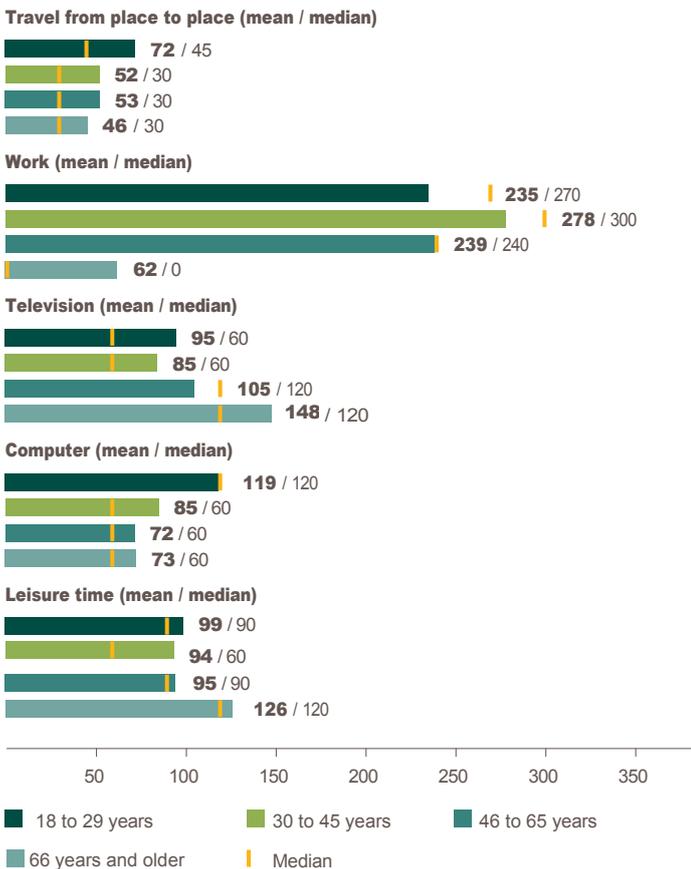
4.3 Age comparison

Of all age groups, it is the younger ones who sit the longest.

18-29 year olds spend well over 10 hours sitting in a chair or armchair, and most of this time is spent at work (235 minutes) or in front of a computer in their free time (119 minutes). People aged 30-45 also spend just under 10 hours sitting, mostly at their desk (278 minutes).

The 46-65 age group spends a total of 9.3 hours sitting, while the group aged 66 and over spends a total of 7.5 hours sitting. The oldest respondents spend almost 2.5 hours of this time in front of the television, and a further 2 hours sitting doing other leisure activities.

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays by age



Total (mean / median)

18 to 29 years: 620 / 641	30 to 45 years: 594 / 630
46 to 65 years: 563 / 570	66 years and older: 456 / 420

(in minutes per working day)

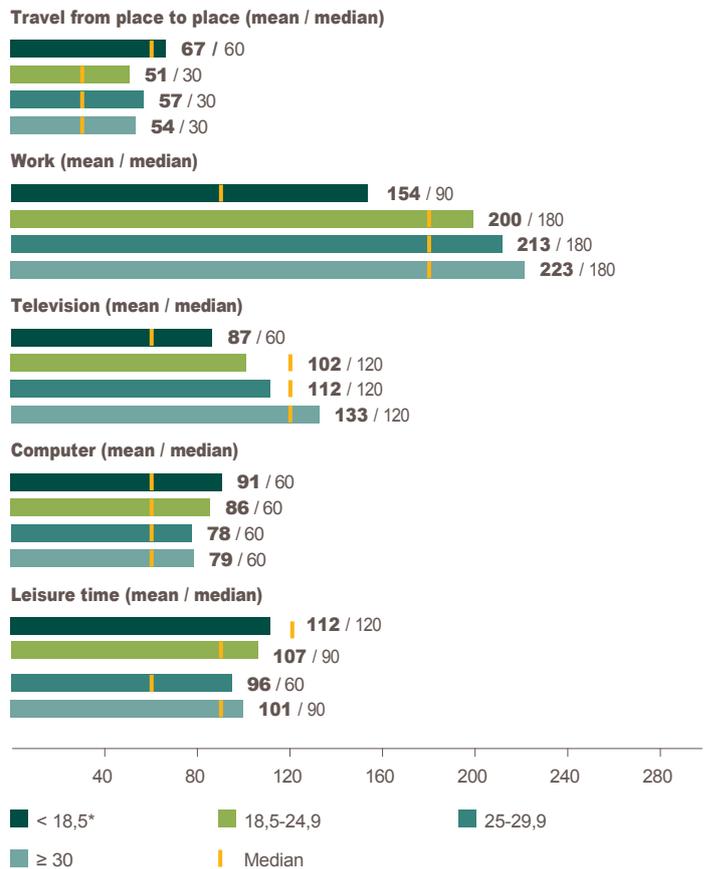
4.4 By body weight

Sitting times higher in people with obesity than in people of normal weight.

People with obesity spend almost 10 hours (590 minutes) sitting, most of which is spent sitting at work (223 minutes), followed by TV time of more than 2 hours (133 minutes). People who are overweight spend slightly less time sitting (557), followed by those of normal weight (547 minutes).

The sitting behavior of the body weight groups differs visibly when watching television. Obese people sit for longer than normal or overweight people. When traveling from place to place or at work, all groups sit for a similar length of time.

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays by body mass index (BMI)



Total (mean / median)

< 18,5*: 512 / 435	18,5-24,9: 547 / 540
25-29,9: 557 / 570	≥ 30: 590 / 595

(in minutes per working day)
* small base

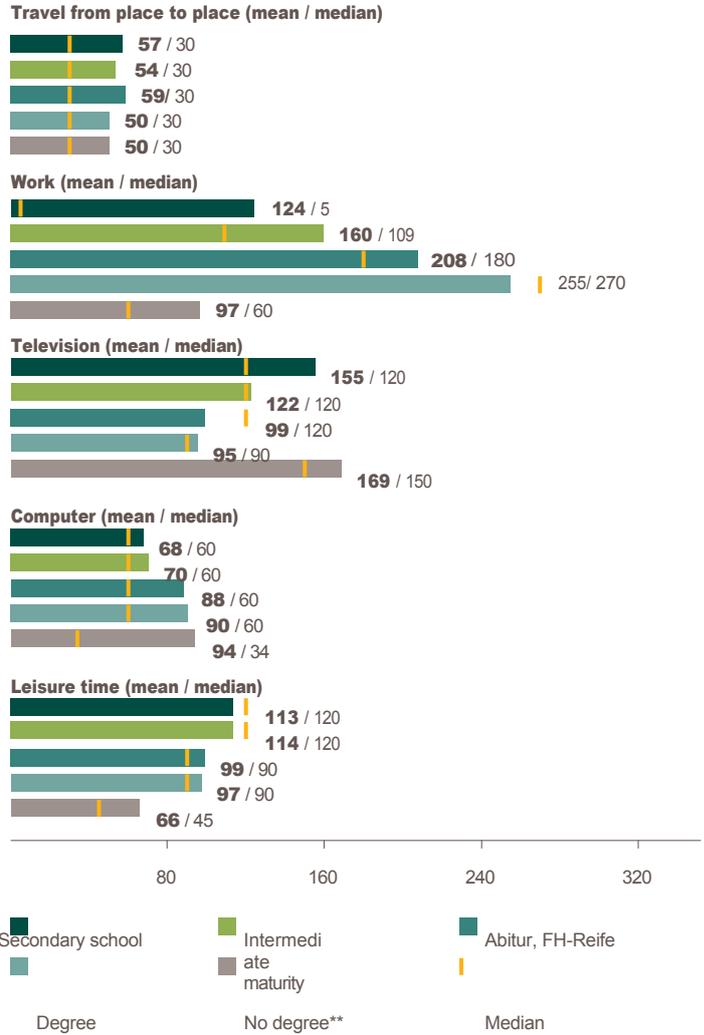
4.5 By educational status

Higher education often means longer periods of sitting at work.

Graduates are once again approaching the 10-hour mark (588 minutes) with their sitting times and are therefore sitting longer than people with lower educational qualifications. They spend more than 4 hours a working day sitting at work. Sitting time for television, leisure computer use and other leisure activities averages around 1.5 hours per working day.

People with a lower secondary school leaving certificate spend an average of 518 minutes per working day in front of the TV - almost a third of this time (155 minutes). Secondary school leavers spend a similar amount of time (519 minutes) and also spend more than 2 hours in front of the TV.

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays by educational status



Total (mean / median)

Secondary school: 518 / 500	Middle maturity: 519 / 510
Abitur, FH-Reife: 553 / 540	Completed studies: 588 / 600
No degree**: 475 / 540	

(in minutes per working day)
** very small base

4.6 By net household income

As income increases, so does the sedentary lifestyle.

Persons with a net household income of more than 2,500 euros clearly sit for more than 10 hours (618 minutes), almost 2 hours more than people with a low net household income of less than 1,500 euros.

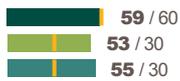
High earners thus spend almost half (305 minutes) of their total working day sitting at work, while

Television, recreational computer use and other leisure time each account for around 1.5 hours. People on low incomes spend around a third of their total sitting time at work (157 minutes).

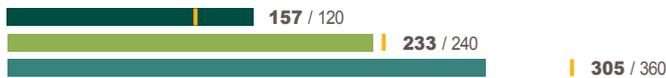
The highest income group spends less time sitting down (90 minutes) than the two lower income groups (102 minutes and 117 minutes respectively).

Mean and median sitting times on weekdays by net household income

Travel from place to place (mean / median)



Work (mean / median)



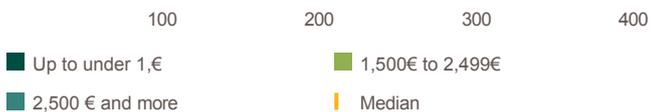
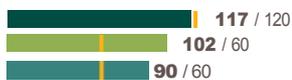
Television (mean / median)



Computer (mean / median)



Leisure time (mean / median)



Total (mean / median)

Up to less than € 1,500: 509 / 480 1,500€ to € 2,499: 551 / 570
 2,500€ and more: 614 / 630

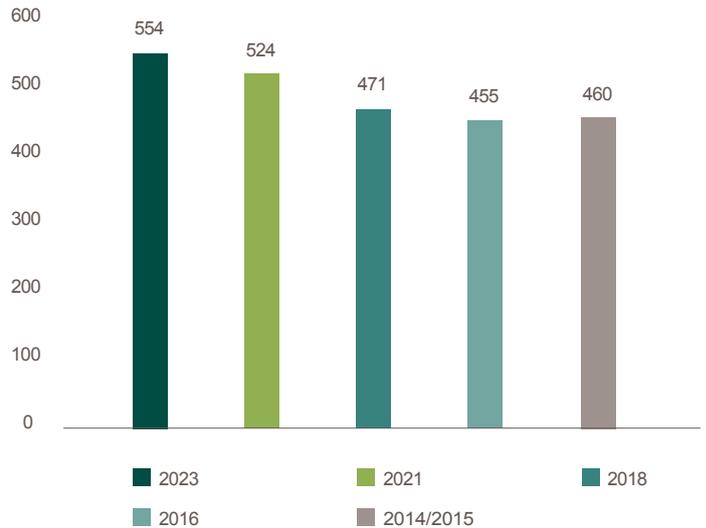
(in minutes per working day)
 * changed Basis of n= 1,535

4.7 In comparison with previous years

Seat times continue to unchecked.

Over the last seven years, the average sitting time of every German has continuously increased by around 1.5 hours.

Average value compared to previous years



(in minutes per working day)



Image

5 Well-being, relaxation and breaks

"How are you?" Most people answer this question with: "Fine." But is that ? The DKV report shows: The higher the subjectively perceived stress level, the more difficult it is to switch off mentally.

In order to get to the bottom of this question this year's DKV Report uses a standardized questionnaire (WHO-5) to find out exactly how you feel: Are you happy and in a good mood? Do you feel relaxed and calm? Do you feel energetic and active? Do you feel fresh and rested when you wake up? Are there many things in your everyday life that interest you? - The answers give a good picture of the subjective well-being of the respondents.

And to complete the picture, the DKV report also asks about break and recovery behavior in leisure time and at work, with the help of the Recovery Experience Questionnaire (REQ) and, for the first time, about breathing.



5.1 Subjective well-being

The subjective well-being score is calculated from the answers to the five statements mentioned above. The best value would be 100 percentage points. The average subjective well-being score for our respondents is 62 percentage points (women 61, men 64).

One in four respondents to the DKV study (25%) also reported a low level of subjective mental well-being below the threshold value of ≤ 50 percentage points. This value is regarded as critical, as it seen as an initial indication of the possible development of depression.¹ At 29%, women are significantly more likely to be affected than male respondents (22%).

Percentage of respondents with regard to higher or lower subjective well-being

	Total	Women	Men
Proportion of respondents with higher subjective well-being (> 50 percentage points)	75	71	78
Proportion of respondents with lower subjective well-being (≤ 50 percentage points)	25	29	22

(figures in percent)

Subjective well-being and exercise

People who feel better move more. 75 percent of people with a higher level of well-being (> 50 percentage points) are among those who are active compared to 63 percent of those who state a low level of well-being (≤ 50 percentage points).

In addition, people in the group with higher well-being (> 50 percentage points) are also more likely to achieve the recommendations for muscle training (44 percent) and the combined exercise recommendations (42 percent) than people with low well-being (≤ 50 percentage points) (30 percent and 27 percent respectively).

¹ Topp, C.W.; Østergaard, S.D.; Søndergaard, S.; Bech, P. (2015). The WHO-5 Well-Being Index: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 84(3), 167-176. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000376585>

5.2 Breathe

We breathe in and out around 20,000 times a day. This happens automatically and mostly unconsciously. We hardly notice that our breathing speeds up when we are under stress, for example. Yet breathing is the only vegetative function of our body that we can consciously control. Conscious breathing therefore offers potential for maintaining our health: for example, if you remember to breathe more calmly, slowly and deeply in stressful situations, you can

z. E.g. alleviating stress symptoms and becoming more relaxed.

Most respondents (85%) state that they have no or only minor problems with breathing. However, the majority (62%) never or only rarely pay attention to their own breathing in everyday life. Women are more mindful of their own breathing: Almost a quarter (24 percent) state that they often or very often consciously pay attention to their own breathing in everyday life. The figure for men is 18 percent.

Just over a fifth (23 percent) of all respondents consciously control their own breathing in specific situations. Women (28 percent) use this more frequently than men (18 percent). Breathing techniques are in particular for stress management.

Percentage of respondents answering the question of whether they consciously pay attention to their breathing in everyday life

	Total	Women	Men
Frequently/very frequently	21	24	18
Sometimes	17	22	12
Never/rarely	62	54	70

(figures in percent)

Percentage of respondents answering the question of whether they control their breathing in specific situations, e.g. to calm down in a stressful situation

	Total	Women	Men
Frequently/very frequently	23	28	18
Sometimes	25	28	21
Never/rarely	53	45	61

(figures in percent)

5.3 Relaxation in everyday life

Unfortunately, not enough use is made of the opportunity create and use small windows of relaxation during the day. A total of 14 percent of respondents do not plan any relaxation breaks into their daily routine at all.

There is a difference between respondents with a high and low level of well-being in relation to their relaxation behavior: Almost half of all Germans (48 percent) with a higher perception of subjective well-being (> 50 percentage points) agree (mostly / completely) with the statement that they plan relaxation into their daily routine.

People with a lower level of well-being (≤ 50 percentage points) do this significantly less frequently at 34 percent.

Percentage of respondents answering the question of whether they plan recreation as an important part of their daily routine

	Total	Women	Men
Fully applicable	22	23	21
Mainly applies	22	24	21
More or less true	24	24	24
Does something apply	18	17	19
Does not apply at all	14	12	15

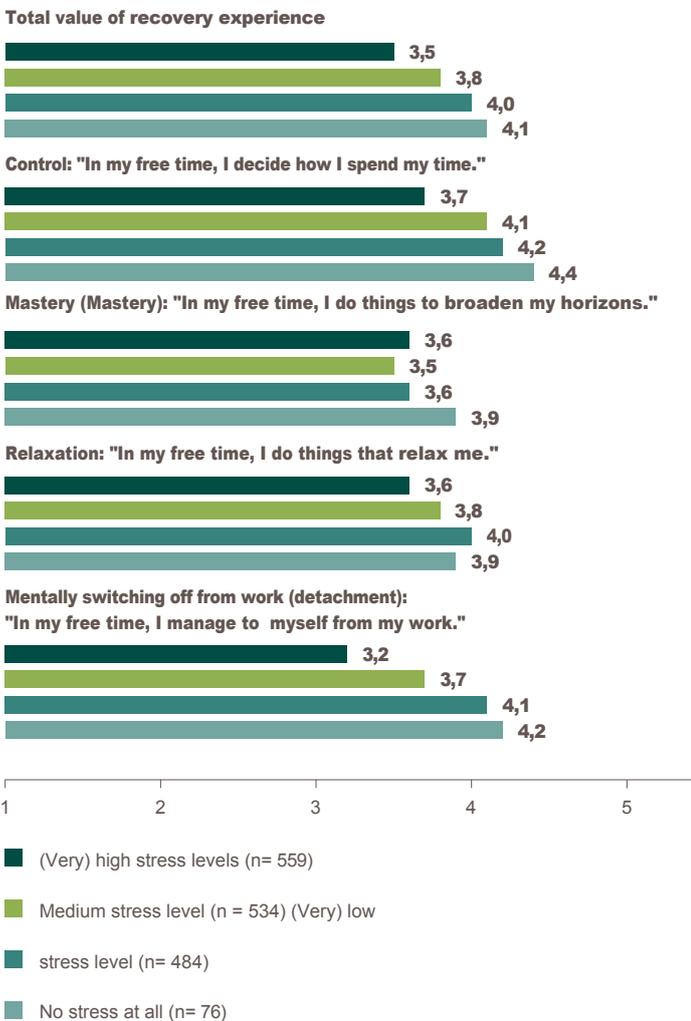
(figures in percent)

5.4 Recreational experience in leisure time

How do respondents manage to get away from work in their free time and really relax? Four statements from the Recovery Experience Questionnaire are used in the report.

When asked about their recovery experience on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the employees responded with average values of 3.6 (mastery), 3.7 (detachment), 3.8 (relaxation) and 4.0 (control), which are in the upper half of the scale. The total value of the recovery experience is 3.8.

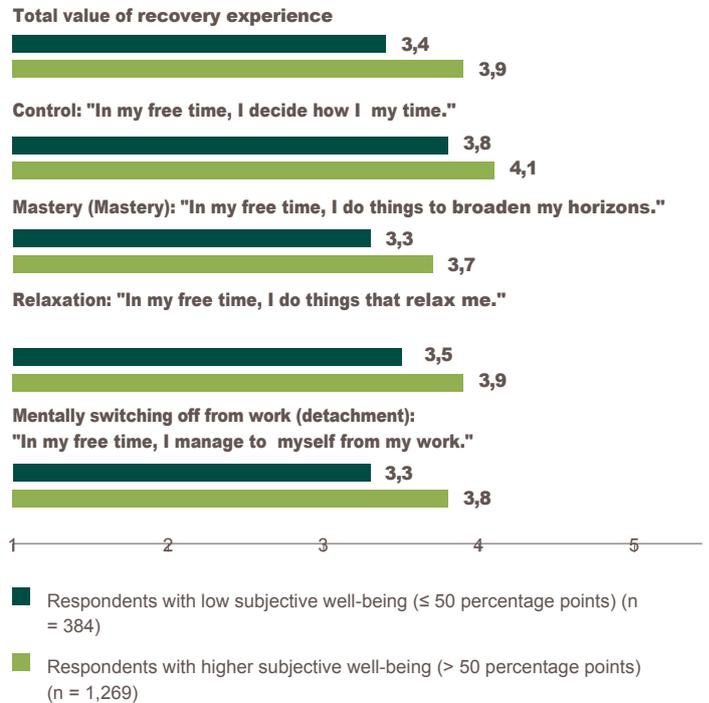
Recovery experience of working people after stress exposure (n = 1,653)



If we look at the recovery experience of working people according to their personal general perception of stress, the following becomes apparent: The higher subjectively perceived stress level, the more difficult it is to mentally switch off from the job, and vice versa. This also applies when we look at the overall value for the recovery experience.

It is also striking that people who rate their own well-being as high also report better relaxation experiences.

Recreational experience of working people by level of subjective well-being (n= 1,653)



5.5 Break behavior during work

Breaks are important time-outs during the working day. Used correctly, they help to recharge your batteries, regenerate, possibly get some exercise, exchange ideas with colleagues and have enough time to eat.

Almost two thirds (63 percent) of the employees surveyed work at the workplace, 22 percent work from home and at the workplace and 15 percent work entirely from home.

Break behavior at the workplace

Almost half of those surveyed take a break in the break room or in the canteen, while more than one in three take a break at work or go out into the fresh air. It is striking that significantly more men than women (44% to 34%) spend their breaks at work. One in five women do not take a break at all.

Percentage of respondents regarding the question of where they spend their break during work when they go to work?

	Total	Women	Men
Break room/canteen	45	41	49
Workplace	39	34	44
I go out into the fresh air	38	33	43
At home (kitchen, living room, etc.)	20	13	28
On the road	18	15	21
I don't take breaks at work	14	22	6
Miscellaneous	5	4	6

(figures in percent)



The top 3 activities during the break at the workplace include: talking to colleagues (66 percent), eating and drinking (65 percent) and using electronic media (36 percent).

Percentage of respondents who often/always do the activity during their break at work

	Frequently/always
Chat with colleagues	66
Eat and drink	65
Using electronic media	36
Go for a walk	19
Listen to music	14
Read	12
Private errands	9
Smoking	9
Hang out/rest/sleep	8
Balancing exercises/sport	5
Relaxation techniques	4
Breathing exercises	4

(figures in percent)

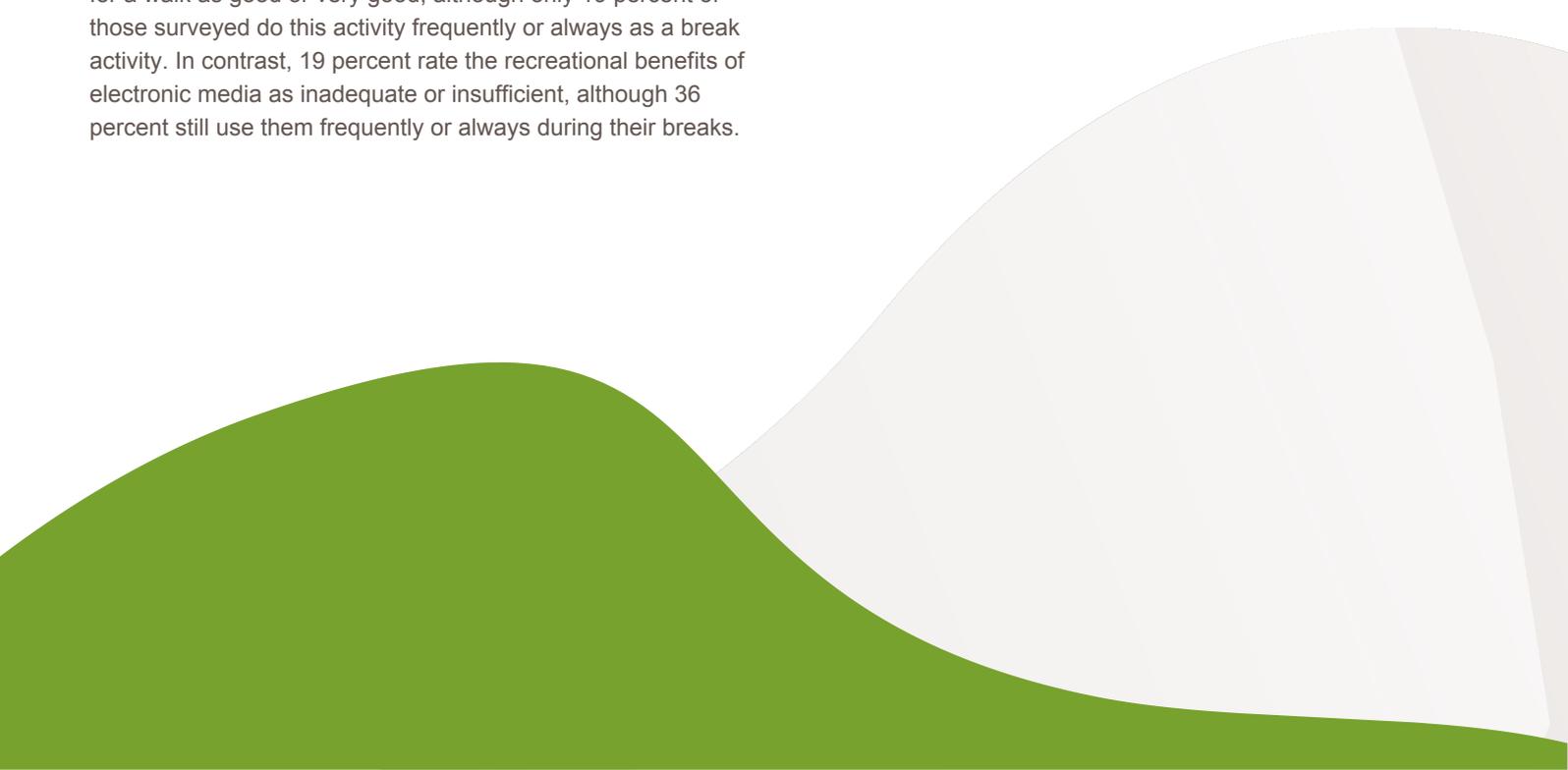
Respondents were asked to rate how well they were able to relax during their breaks at work according to the school grading system.

Looking at the self-assessed recovery performance of the activity using the school grading system (1 = "very good" to 6 = "unsatisfactory"), it is striking that 77% of those who talk to colleagues also rate this as good or very good in terms of relaxation. 70 percent also rate the recreational benefits of going for a walk as good or very good, although only 19 percent of those surveyed do this activity frequently or always as a break activity. In contrast, 19 percent rate the recreational benefits of electronic media as inadequate or insufficient, although 36 percent still use them frequently or always during their breaks.

Assessment of the recovery performance of the break activity at the workplace by respondents who frequently or always perform this activity, according to the school grading principle

	Very good & good	Satisfactory/sufficient	Inadequate/unsatisfactory
Talking with colleagues (n = 793)	77	20	4
Eating and drinking (n = 786)	70	26	4
Going for a walk (n = 235)	70	21	9
Compensatory exercises/ sport (n = 63)	67	15	18
Listen to music (n= 173)	66	24	10
Smoking (n= 108)	62	35	3
Breathing exercises (n= 44)	62	29	9
Hanging out/resting/sleeping (n = 100)	52	27	21
Relaxation (n = 49)	47	44	9
Use electronic media (n = 430)	47	34	19
Reading (n= 149)	45	36	19
Private errands (n = 111)	44	44	12

(figures in percent)



Break behavior in the home office

People who work from home generally also spend their breaks within their own four walls. According to 8 out of 10 respondents. Just under half (47 percent) go out into the fresh air. What is also striking here is that 16 percent of women do not take a break at all, compared to 7 percent of men.

Percentage of respondents answering the question of where they spend their break when working from home

	Total	Women	Men
At home (kitchen, living room, etc.)	79	74	82
I go out into the fresh air	47	46	48
On the road	18	18	17
I don't take a break in the home office	11	16	7
Canteen/cafeteria/restaurant	4	3	5
Miscellaneous	6	5	7

(figures in percent)

At the top of the list of activities during the home office break are eating and drinking (63%). 46% use electronic media and just under a third talk to friends and family (31%). In addition, 26% of respondents look after the household and 16% look after children during their home office breaks.

Proportion of respondents who often/always work from home during their break

	Frequently/always
Eat and drink	63
Using electronic media	46
Entertaining with family/friends	31
Household	26
Phone calls	25
Go for a walk	23
Listen to music	20
Private errands	18
Childcare (cooking lunch, homework, etc.)	16
Read	12
Hang out/rest/sleep	11
Smoking	9
Balancing exercises/sport	8
Breathing exercises	8
Relaxation techniques	6

(figures in percent)

Here, too, respondents were asked to rate how well they were able to relax during their work breaks according to the school no-tice principle.

If we also look at the self-assessed recreational performance of the activity using the school grading system (1= "very good" to 6 = "unsatisfactory"), it is noticeable that 81% of those who smoke at home during their break also rate this as good or very good in terms of recreation. Fortunately, however, only 9 percent indulge in this addiction. 79% rate the recreational benefits of sport and exercise as good or very good, but only 8% of respondents engage in these activities during their home office breaks. Electronic media, on the other hand, are not rated as good in terms of their recreational performance - almost half of those who use them during their break give them a school grade of 3 or 4.

Surprisingly, electronic media are still used by almost half (46 percent).

Assessment of the recovery performance of the break activity in the home office by respondents who frequently or always perform this activity, according to the school grading principle

	Very good & good	Satisfactory/sufficient	Inadequate/unsatisfactory
Smoking (n= 48)	81	13	6
Compensatory exercises/ sport (n = 42)	79	18	4
Listen to music (n= 110)	77	18	5
Entertaining with family/friends (n= 167)	74	24	3
Going for a walk (n = 126)	69	20	11
Eating and drinking (n = 344)	66	27	7
Breathing exercises (n= 41)	65	30	5
Hanging out/resting/sleeping (n = 60)	57	20	23
Reading (n= 67)	51	37	12
Telephoning (n= 136)	49	38	13
Childcare (cooking lunch, homework, etc.) (n = 85)	45	35	20
Relaxation (n = 34)	45	43	12
Use electronic media (n = 249)	38	48	13
Household (n =140)	38	36	27
Private errands (n = 99)	35	44	21

(figures in percent)



6 Healthy living in the federal states

The analysis by federal state brings a further illustrative perspective to the results of the DKV report. Where do people smoke or drink the most? In which federal state do people deal best with stress or exercise the most?

Not even one in five Germans (17 percent) lives a completely healthy life. The healthiest living conditions are found in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Palatinate/Saarland (21 percent) and in Baden-Württemberg (21 percent), followed by Saxony (20 percent). North Rhine-Westphalia brings up the rear, with only one in eight residents (12%) achieving all benchmarks in the categories of physical activity, diet, smoking, alcohol and stress.

Hamburgers, on the other hand, are at the forefront when it comes to exercise and diet. The German capital, on the other hand, is home to the most sedentary people. At the same time, more people smoke in these two federal states than in the rest of the country. And sitting is particularly common in the western federal states. Sitting times are somewhat shorter in the east of the republic.



6.1 Overall results in a country comparison

People in the southwest lead the healthiest lifestyles.

Of the Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland, Baden-Württemberg and Saxony respondents, a good one in five manage to get enough exercise, eat a healthy diet, give up so-called stimulants such as cigarettes and alcohol and deal well with stress.

In contrast, only one in eight people in North Rhine-Westphalia manages to lead a healthy life and meet all the requirements for a healthy lifestyle.



Achievement of all benchmarks in a country comparison

■ > 20,0 ■ 17,1-20,0 ■ 14,0-17,0 ■ < 14,0

Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	20,9
Baden-Württemberg	20,7
Saxony	20,0
Schleswig-Holstein	19,6
Brandenburg	18,6
Bavaria	18,5
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	18,4
Saxony-Anhalt	18,3
Lower Saxony/Bremen	17,8
Thuringia	17,3
Berlin	15,3
Hamburg	13,6
Hesse	13,4
North Rhine-Westphalia	12,2

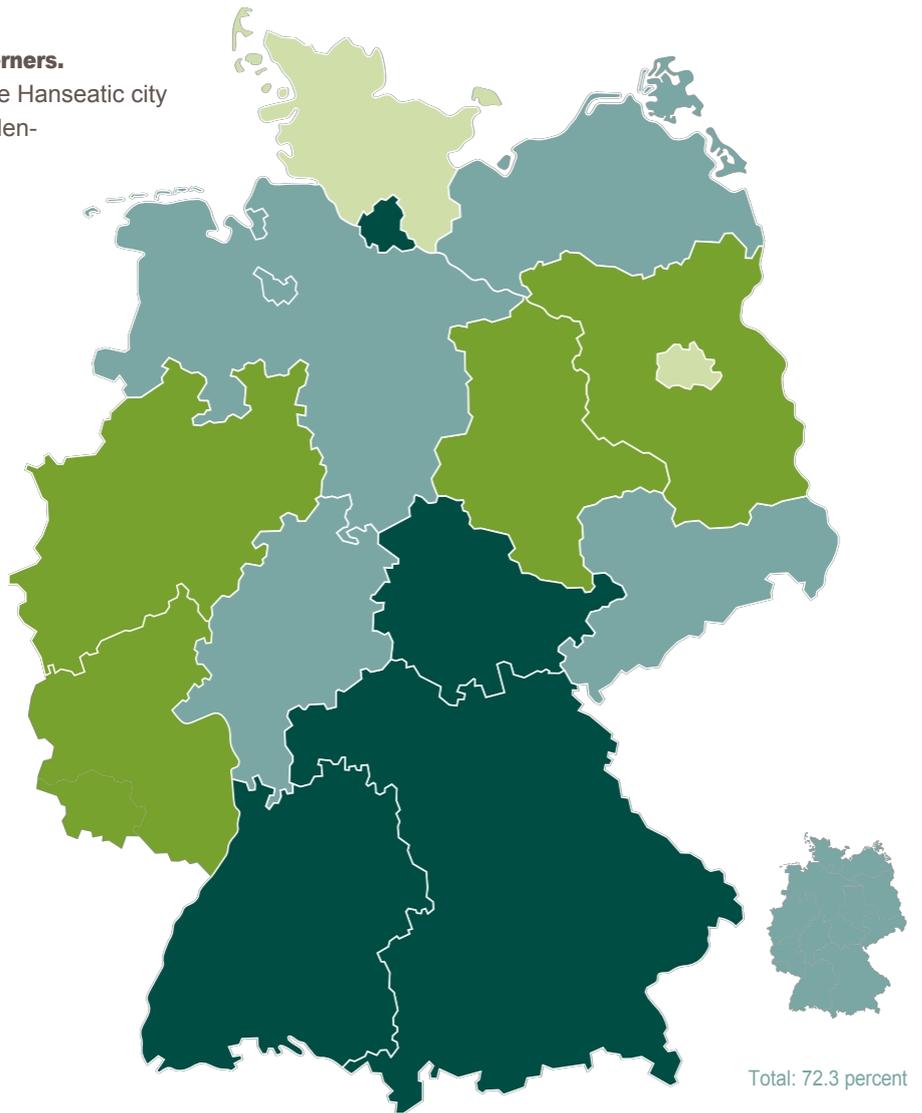
(figures in percent)

6.2 Physical activity

Movement alliance of northerners and southerners.

Hamburg and Bavaria are the most active: in the Hanseatic city (76 percent), in Bavaria (76 percent) and in Baden-Württemberg (75 percent), more than three quarters of all residents get enough exercise to achieve additional health benefits.

People living in the capital are the least likely to exercise (65 percent), followed by the coastal residents of Schleswig-Holstein (68 percent) and the Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland (70 percent).



Proportion of physically active people in a country comparison.

Achieve Benchmark physical activity "Active"

■ > 74,0 ■ 71,1-74,0 ■ 68,0-71,0 ■ < 68,0

Hamburg	76,3
Bavaria	76,2
Baden-Württemberg	74,8
Thuringia	74,4
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	73,7
Saxony	72,5
Hesse	72,3
Lower Saxony/Bremen	72,2
Saxony-Anhalt	70,8
Brandenburg	70,3
North Rhine-Westphalia	70,2
Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	69,8
Schleswig-Holstein	67,6
Berlin	65,4

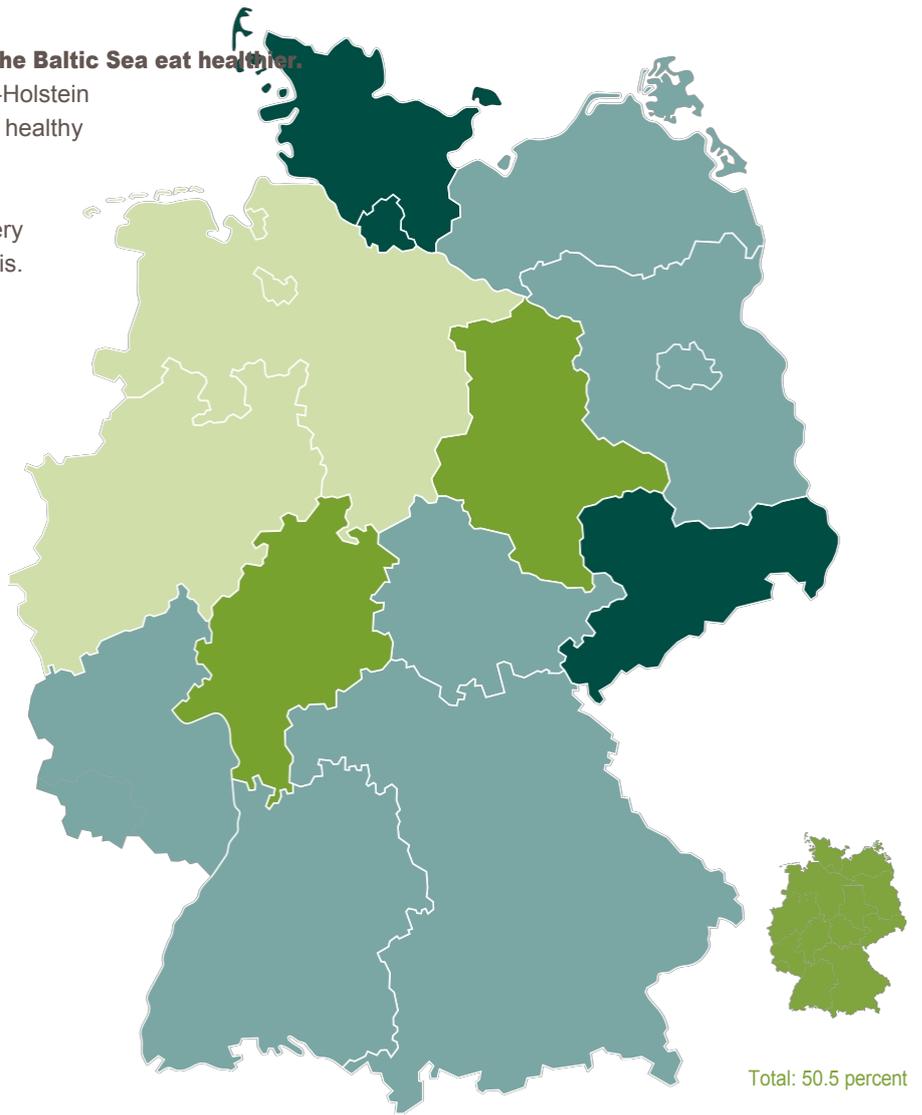
(figures in percent)

6.3 Nutrition

People who live between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea eat healthier.

More than one in two Hanseatic and Schleswig-Holstein residents (58 percent) pay attention to a varied, healthy diet.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, not even every second inhabitant (40%) manages to do this. People in Lower Saxony and Bremen also (48 percent) and Hesse (49 percent), not even one in two meet the requirements for a healthy diet.



Proportion of people with a healthy diet in a country comparison.

Achieving benchmark nutrition

■ > 56,0 ■ 51,1-56,0 ■ 48,0-51,0 ■ < 48,0

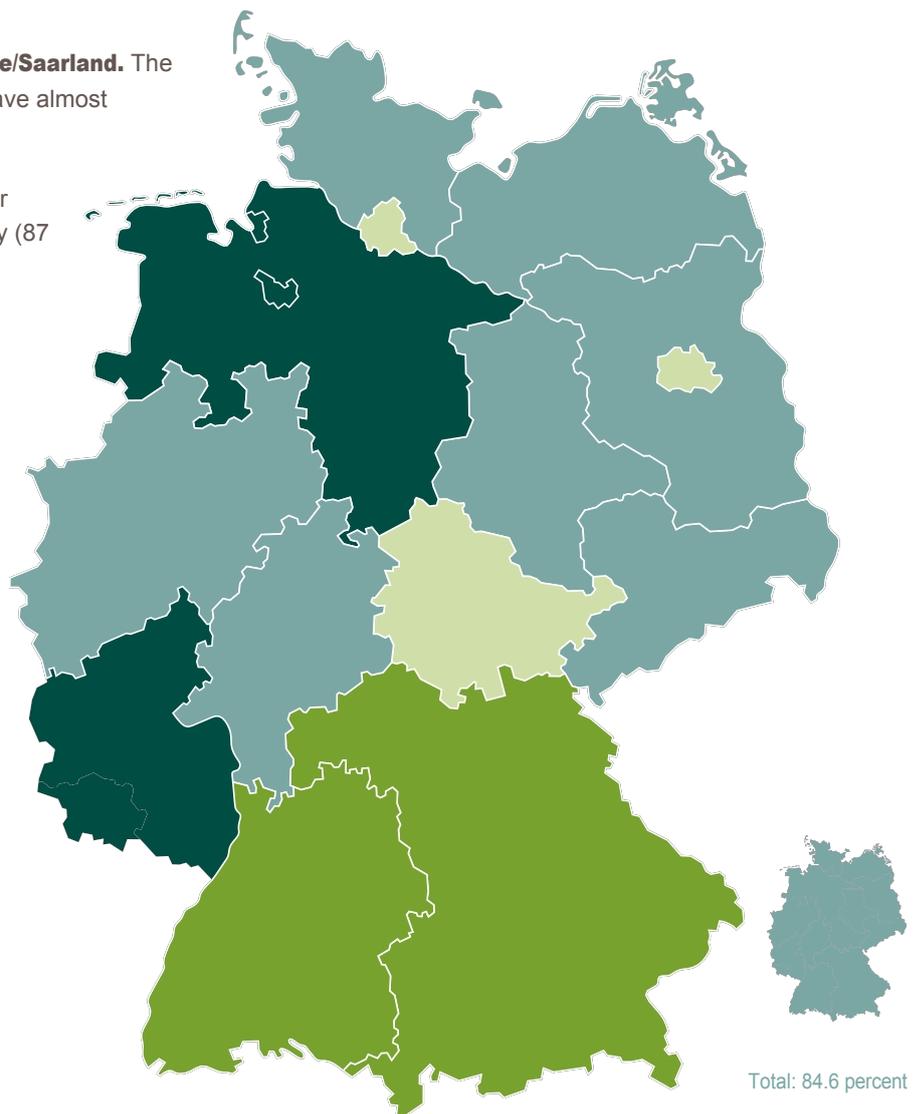
Hamburg	57,6
Schleswig-Holstein	57,6
Saxony	57,0
Brandenburg	55,9
Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	55,6
Bavaria	55,0
Baden-Württemberg	54,2
Berlin	53,0
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	51,8
Thuringia	51,3
Saxony-Anhalt	50,9
Hesse	49,3
Lower Saxony/Bremen	47,5
North Rhine-Westphalia	40,1

(figures in percent)

6.4 No smoking

Most non-smokers live in Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland. The inhabitants of Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland have almost completely given up tobacco: Not even every One in ten (92 percent) still smokes here. Non-smokers are also clearly in the majority in Lower Saxony and Bremen (88 percent) and in Saxony (87 percent).

However, smoking appears to be more common in large cities: Hamburg (79 percent) and Berlin (80 percent) are at the bottom of the country comparison of non-smokers.



Proportion of non-smokers in a country comparison.

Achieve benchmark smoking

■ > 88,0
 ■ 84,1-88,0
 ■ 80,0-84,0
 ■ < 80,0

Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	92,3
Lower Saxony/Bremen	88,1
Saxony	87,2
North Rhine-Westphalia	86,6
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	86,5
Hesse	86,2
Saxony-Anhalt	85,9
Brandenburg	85,6
Schleswig-Holstein	85,5
Baden-Württemberg	80,9
Bavaria	80,4
Thuringia	79,7
Berlin	79,5
Hamburg	78,6

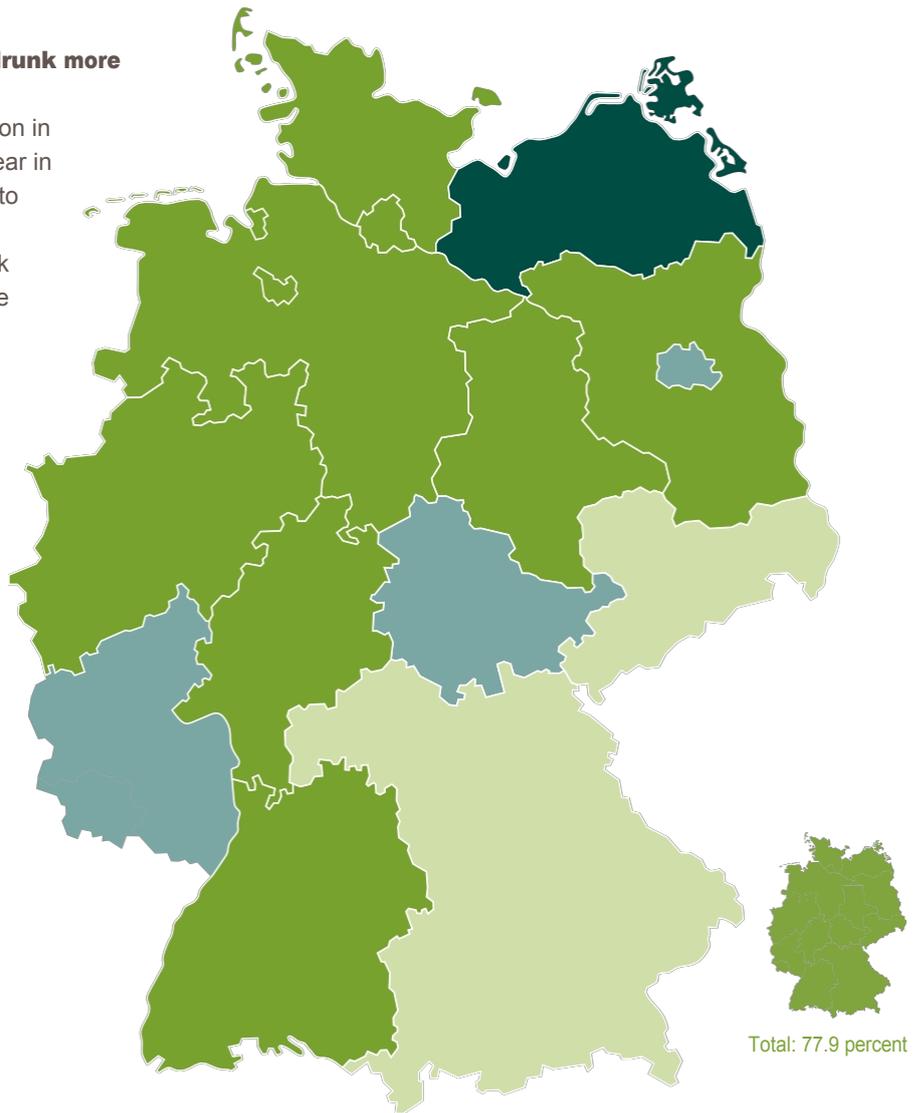
(figures in percent)

6.5 Alcohol consumption

Where hops and wine thrive, alcohol is also drunk more often.

Bavaria is home to the largest hop-growing region in the world and the Bavarians also bring up the rear in Germany when it comes to a healthy approach to alcohol: only 73 percent of all Bavarians achieve the required benchmark here. Saxony is just ahead (74%). Hesse, where the most wine is grown in Germany, also ranks in the bottom third (77%) of the table.

The residents of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern are the frontrunners when it comes to a healthy approach to beer, wine or spirits: 85 percent of all residents have a healthy approach to alcoholic beverages.



Proportion of people with moderate alcohol consumption in a country comparison.

Reach benchmark alcohol

■ > 83,0 ■ 80,1-83,0 ■ 77,0-80,0 ■ < 77,0

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	84,6
Thuringia	81,7
Berlin	81,6
Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	81,1
Baden-Württemberg	80,0
Hamburg	79,8
North Rhine-Westphalia	78,9
Brandenburg	77,5
Saxony-Anhalt	77,5
Hesse	77,4
Lower Saxony/Bremen	77,4
Schleswig-Holstein	77,2
Saxony	74,3
Bavaria	72,7

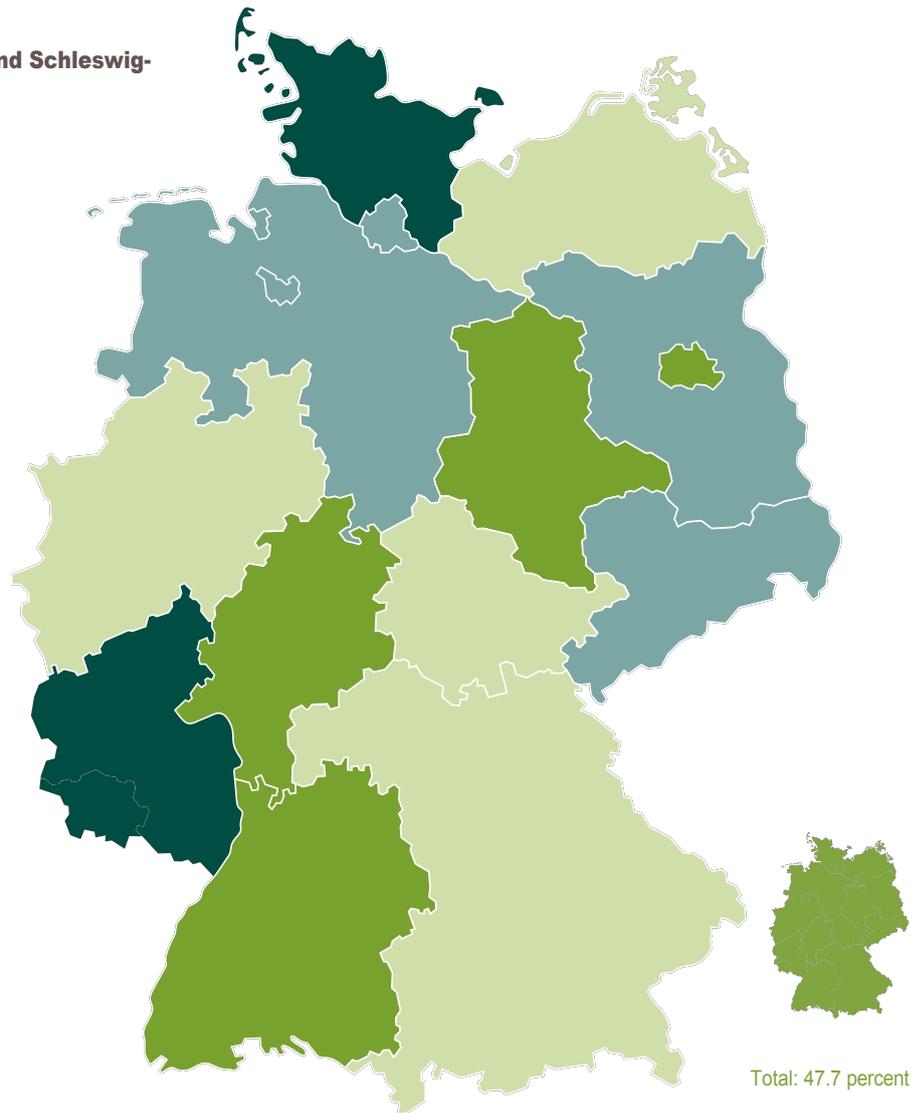
(figures in percent)

6.6 Perception of stress

People from Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein cope best with stress.

While across Germany not even every second German (48 percent) manages to deal with stress in a healthy way, citizens in Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland (57 percent), followed by Schleswig-Holstein (56 percent), Hamburg (54 percent) and Saxony (53 percent) do so more often than average.

In North Rhine-Westphalia (43%), Bavaria (45%), Thuringia (45%) and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (46%), on the other hand, life is apparently somewhat less relaxed.



Proportion of people with a healthy perception of stress in a country comparison.

Benchmark stress perception

■ > 54,0 ■ 50,1-54,0 ■ 46,0-50,0 ■ < 46,0

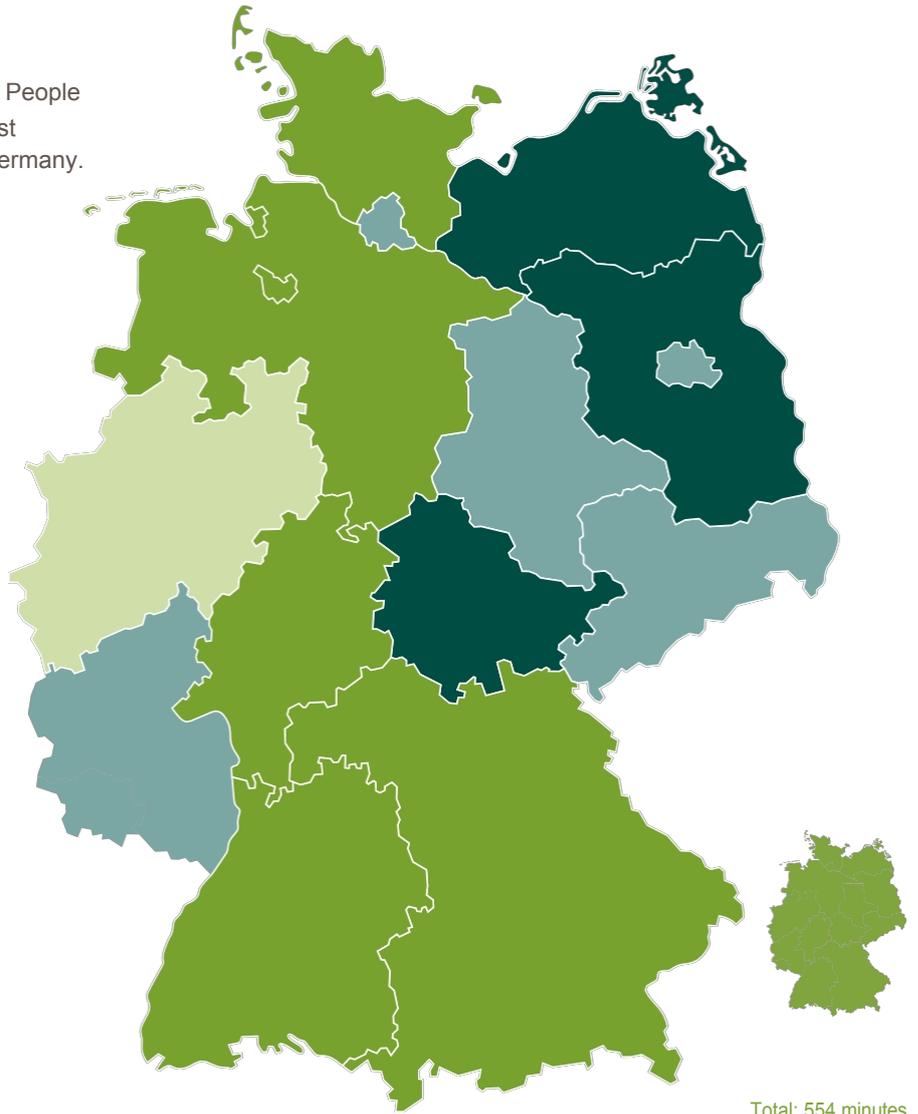
Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	56,8
Schleswig-Holstein	56,3
Hamburg	53,5
Saxony	53,1
Brandenburg	51,0
Lower Saxony/Bremen	50,5
Hesse	49,6
Saxony-Anhalt	47,6
Berlin	46,7
Baden-Württemberg	46,1
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	45,7
Thuringia	45,3
Bavaria	45,0
North Rhine-Westphalia	43,1

(figures in percent)

6.7 Sitting

People in the East sit less than in the West. People in the western federal states are among the most sedentary: the sad record is held by northern Germany. Rhine-Westphalia with almost 10 hours (590 minutes) of sitting time per working day. In Bavaria (566 minutes), Schleswig-Holstein (561 minutes) and Lower Saxony/Bremen (560 minutes), the figure is still almost 9.5 hours per working day, which are spent seated.

By contrast, people in Brandenburg (505 minutes), Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Thuringia (507 minutes each) sit for more than a whole hour less, namely 8.5 hours.



Total: 554 minutes

Average sitting times of all respondents on a weekday (mean value) in a country comparison.

Sitting on weekdays



Brandenburg	505
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	507
Thuringia	507
Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland	513
Saxony	526
Berlin	533
Saxony-Anhalt	534
Hamburg	539
Hesse	543
Baden-Württemberg	553
Lower Saxony/Bremen	560
Schleswig-Holstein	561
Bavaria	566
North Rhine-Westphalia	590

(in minutes)



7 Conclusion

The vast majority of Germans feel very healthy and well. However, not even one in five actually achieve all the benchmarks for an all-round healthy life. These include regular exercise, a varied and healthy diet, a conscious approach to alcohol, abstaining from cigarettes as well as perceived stress levels and the ability to deal with them and relax.

In addition, this year we have once again shed new light on sitting behavior and other important topics, such as muscle training, subjective well-being and break and recovery behavior.

The DKV report reveals a number of alarming health risks and facts for some of these areas:

- Less than two-fifths of respondents achieve the current exercise recommendations of muscle training and endurance-oriented exercise.
- Germans are sitting longer and longer every year.
- A quarter of all Germans report low (critical) subjective mental well-being, which is often seen as the first indication of a possible development of depression. This affects more women than men.
- 14 percent of respondents do not actively plan relaxation breaks into their daily routine.

People in the so-called rush hour of life, between the ages of 30 and 45, are particularly likely to lead unhealthy lives: only one in ten of them meet all the benchmarks for a healthy life. This age group feels particularly burdened by stress.

But there is also good news:

- More people are once again achieving all the benchmarks for good health.
- If you good, you move more, and vice versa.
- Fewer and fewer Germans are turning to cigarettes.
- Just over a fifth of all respondents consciously control their breathing in specific situations - women more often than men.
- Active relaxation breaks during the working day, such as going for a walk, playing sport or doing exercise, are rated by the majority as very good or good in terms of relaxation performance - however, far too few respondents still engage in these activities.

Overall, it is clear that there is a lot of untapped potential for a better life in some areas of healthcare:

- More exercise and muscle training in all age groups helps to maintain physical and mental health for longer.
- Reducing our daily sitting time reduces our risk of death and prevents numerous diseases, including diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and even cancer.
- A more conscious approach to underestimated resources such as the integration of relaxation into our everyday lives, active breaks at work, conscious breathing and the reduction of stress helps to prevent the development of illnesses and increases our resilience.

There are already many tips and advice from trusted sources on how to live a more active, healthy and balanced life. But the first step has to be taken by each and every one of us. Set yourself achievable goals and simply start - now.



Imprint

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