

Many New Yorkers Do Not Have Safe Places to Walk or Bike for Transportation



The Division of Chronic Disease Prevention Public Opinion Poll is an annual data collection activity coordinated by New York State Department of Health to assess public awareness and support about public health priorities. The poll uses mixed sampling methods and is conducted via a random-digit-dial phone survey and a web panel.

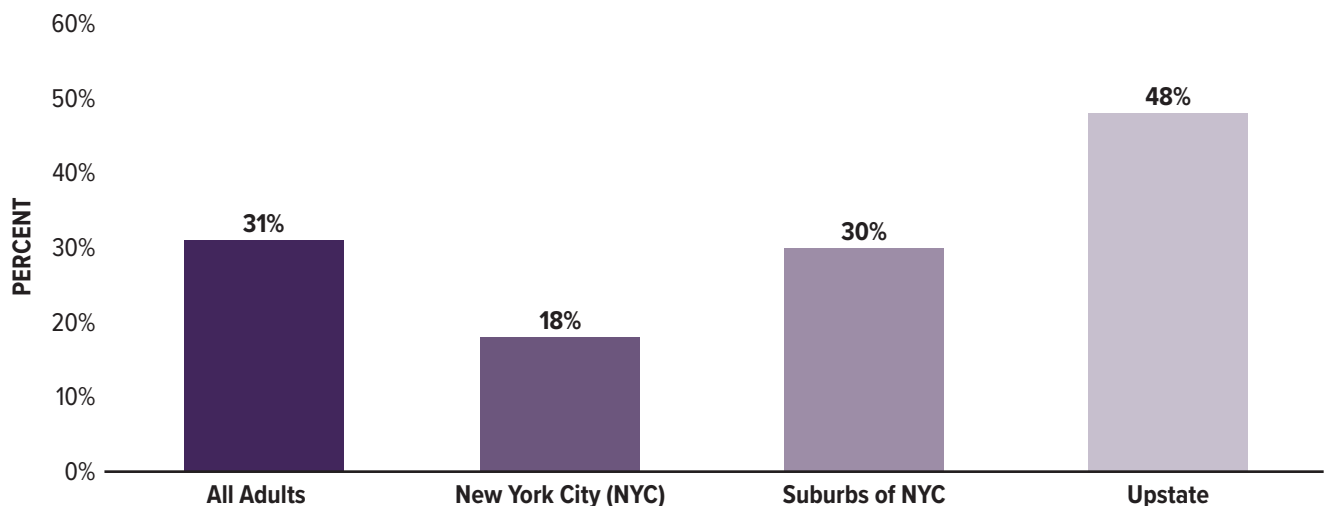
Physical activity has major health benefits. It lowers the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers, and early death. In the short term, it strengthens muscles and bones, eases arthritis pain, improves mental health and brain function, and helps with sleep.¹ Despite the benefits, many New Yorkers don't get enough physical activity. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 74% of New York State adults engage in some type of physical activity at least monthly, but only 31% are engaging in adequate aerobic and strengthening activities to meet national recommendations for maintaining health.²

Walking and biking are easy ways to stay active, whether it be for transportation, leisure, or both. People are more likely to walk or bike for transportation if they have safe, convenient routes that connect to places they need to go. Not all communities are currently able to support this activity. Some lack nearby destinations, while others have unsafe roads, missing sidewalks or no bike lanes. Crime and safety concerns can also discourage people from walking or biking, even when locations are close by.

Poll Findings

Data from the most recent New York State Chronic Disease Public Opinion Poll show that 1 in 3 (31%) New Yorkers disagree that there are places to safely walk or bicycle from their home to places such as stores, restaurants and other businesses. Disagreement is more common among adults living in Upstate than those living in NYC or its suburbs.

FIGURE 1. Percent of adults who disagree that there are safe places to walk or for transportation, by Region, New York State Public Opinion Poll, 2025



Note: NYC includes residents of the following counties: Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond. Suburbs of NYC includes Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester. Upstate includes all other counties not included in NYC or Suburbs of NYC.

Public Health Opportunity

- To increase the prevalence of walking and biking in New York State, the Prevention Agenda 2025 - 2030 focuses on the social determinants of health, including “Neighborhood and Built Environment” strategies to increase opportunities for active transportation and physical activity.
- Local and regional public health, planning, transportation, and business partners can work with decision-makers, municipalities, and community coalitions to develop and implement Complete Streets policies, plans, and projects that create or enhance pedestrian infrastructure for safe and accessible walkable and bikeable communities.
- County-level estimates of physical activity can be used to identify priority areas, inform program planning, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies.
- Public health organizations and programs can also use this information to educate local decision-makers and increase community engagement with people of diverse lived experiences who may be impacted by potential neighborhood and built environment changes in their communities.

Wording of Survey Question, New York State Public Opinion Poll, 2025

- **Question:** There are places to safely walk or bicycle from my home to places such as stores, restaurants and other businesses. Response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know/refused.

For more information, please send an e-mail to BCDER@health.ny.gov with IFA #2025-23 in the subject line. To access other Information for Action reports, visit the New York State Department of Health website: health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action.

1. United States Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. Available from: https://odphp.health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf.
2. Physical Activity, New York State Adults, 2023. New York State Behavioral Risk Factor System Brief, No. 2025-08. Available from: https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/2025-08_brfss_physical_activity.pdf.



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