

Physical Functioning and Falls During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ALL RESPONDENTS

Q1. Moderate physical activities include activities such as brisk walking, housework, or mowing the lawn. Since March 2020, how often have you done moderate or more vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes?

1. Every day or nearly every day
2. Several times a week
3. About once a week
4. Every 2–3 weeks
5. Once a month or less
6. Never

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q2. How has the amount of moderate or more vigorous physical activity you do changed since March 2020, if at all?

1. More physically active now
2. Less physically active now
3. No change in my physical activity

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q3. How has the amount of time you spend on your feet standing or walking on a typical day changed since March 2020, if at all?

1. More time
2. Less time
3. No change



ALL RESPONDENTS

Q4. Physical conditioning is a person’s flexibility, muscle strength, endurance, and ability to do physical activity. Mobility is a person’s ability to move around on one’s own – by walking, using assistive devices such as a cane or walker, or by using transportation.

How would you say your physical conditioning and mobility have changed since March 2020, if at all?

	Improved	Worsened	No change
Physical conditioning			
Mobility			

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q5. Falls are where a person ends up on the ground or a lower level due to a loss of balance, slip, or trip.

Since March 2020, how many times have you fallen?

1. 0 times
2. 1 time
3. 2–3 times
4. 4 or more times

If Q5 = 2, 3, or 4

Q6. Since March 2020, have you had any of the following injuries or consequences from your fall(s)? Select all that apply.

1. Bruising
2. Cut or laceration requiring a bandage
3. Cut or laceration requiring sutures/stitches
4. Broken bone requiring a cast or splint
5. Sprain
6. Joint dislocation
7. Head injury
8. None of the above

If Q5 = 2, 3, or 4

Q7. Did you receive any of the following types of care because of fall(s)? Select all that apply.

1. Informal care (from family members/friends)
2. Primary care (from a primary care physician or nurse)
3. Emergency care (emergency department or urgent care)
4. Hospitalization (including surgery)
5. Physical or occupational therapy
6. Rehabilitation in a skilled nursing facility
7. None of the above

If Q5 = 2, 3, or 4

Q8. Did you delay or not get any medical care that you felt you needed after your fall(s)? Select all that apply.

1. Yes, delayed care
2. Yes, did not get care
3. No



If Q8 = 1 or 2

Q9. Was the COVID-19 pandemic the major reason for delaying or not getting care you felt you needed?

1. Yes
2. No

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q10. Are you afraid of falling?

1. Yes, very afraid of falling
2. Yes, somewhat afraid of falling
3. No, not afraid of falling

If Q10 = 1, 2

Q11. How has your fear of falling changed since March 2020?

1. More fearful of falling
2. Less fearful of falling
3. No change in my fear of falling

Data Source and Methods

This National Poll on Healthy Aging report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Ipsos Public Affairs, LLC (“Ipsos”) for the University of Michigan’s Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. National Poll on Healthy Aging surveys are conducted by recruiting from Ipsos KnowledgePanel®, the largest national, probability-based panel in the U.S.

This survey module was administered online in January 2021 to a randomly selected, stratified group of older adults age 50–80 (n=2,023). The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The completion rate was 78% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of error is ±1 to 3 percentage points for questions asked of the full sample and higher among subgroups.

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National Poll on Healthy Aging Team

Preeti Malani, MD, MSJ, MS, Director
Jeffrey Kullgren, MD, MS, MPH, Associate Director
Erica Solway, PhD, MPH, MSW, Associate Director
Geoffrey Hoffman, PhD, MPH, Faculty Collaborator
Dianne Singer, MPH, Production Manager
Matthias Kirch, MS, Data Analyst

The Regents of the University of Michigan

Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos
Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms
Ron Weiser, Ann Arbor
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Mark S. Schlissel (ex officio)

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