



The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health.

Special report on physical health and wellbeing

New Zealand | April 2023



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What you need to know for April 2023.

1. Nearly two in five workers in New Zealand have a high mental health risk.

- At 60.9, the mental health of workers in New Zealand declined from the prior period
- All mental health sub-scores declined from January 2023.
- 38% have a high mental health risk, 47% have a moderate mental health risk, and 15% have a low mental health risk
- Northland has the lowest mental health score followed by Otago/Southland, Manawatū-Whanganui/Taranaki, and Bay of Plenty
- The combined region of Marlborough, Nelson, Tasman, and West Coast has the highest mental health score
- Labourers have a lower mental health score than service and office workers
- Managers have higher mental health score than non-managers

2. One in seven workers report mental health decline or significant mental health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their mental health or significant mental health challenges are 39 or more points below workers reporting good mental health and 24 or more points below the national average
- Labourers are more likely to report their health is in decline compared to office workers
- Workers older than 50 are more likely than workers under 40 to self-report good mental health



do not exercise
this group's mental health scores are much lower than those who exercise most days



hours or more of
vigorous exercise per week is the point where mental health scores increase



are dissatisfied
with the level of available healthcare



say their **physical health is in decline** or have significant health challenges

3. One in six workers report a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges are 28 or more points below workers reporting good physical health and 16 or more points below the national average
- 29 per cent of workers cite motivation and/or no energy as the barrier to exercising regularly
- 10 per cent of workers say caregiving obligations is the biggest barrier to exercising regularly
- 18 per cent do not exercise and the mental health score of this group is 11 points below workers who exercise four or more times per week
- 17 per cent exercise to improve or maintain their mental health
- Workers under 40 are more likely to exercise to improve/maintain their mental health

4. One-third report access to affordable nutritious foods would be most helpful in managing their physical health.

- 83 per cent believe physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health
- Most workers indicate that they exercise vigorously less than 1.5 hours a week; however, better mental health scores are seen at 3.5 hours per week or more
- 8 per cent say managing their physical health starts with their mental health; this group has a mental health score 14 points lower than the national average
- 13 per cent of workers have a physical health issue that interferes with work
- Among workers with a physical health issue that interferes with work, 35 per cent say their employer is unaware, or are unsure whether their employer is aware, of their physical health issue

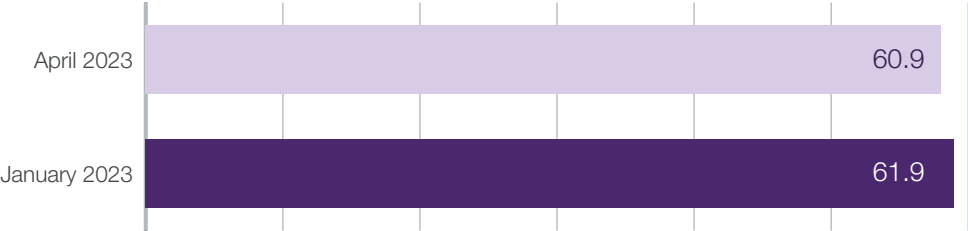
5. One in six workers are dissatisfied with the level of available healthcare.

- The mental health score of workers dissatisfied with available healthcare is nearly 17 points lower than satisfied workers and 11 points lower than the national average
- Women are 50 per cent more likely than men to be dissatisfied with the level of available healthcare
- 35 per cent of those dissatisfied cite long wait times for treatment
- 30 per cent of those dissatisfied cite cost for care
- 17 per cent of those dissatisfied cite poor quality of care



The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for April 2023 is 60.9.
The mental health of workers in New Zealand declined from the prior period.

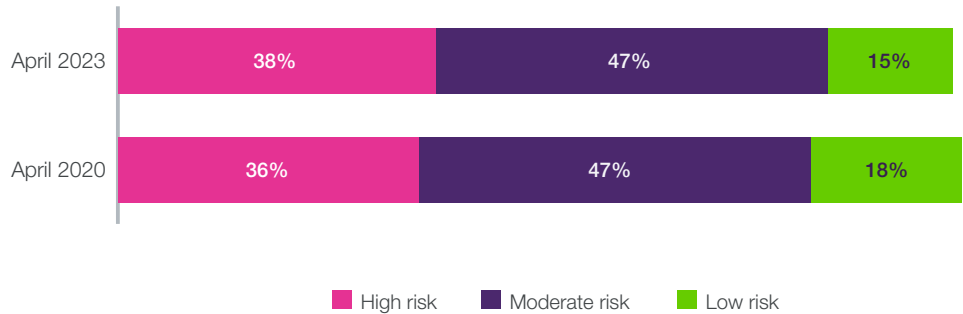


MHI Current Month April 2023	March 2023
60.9	61.9

Mental health risk.

In April 2023, 38 per cent of workers in New Zealand have a high mental health risk, 47 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 15 per cent have a low mental health risk. There is a two per cent increase in the high-risk group (from 36 per cent to 38 per cent) since January 2023.

Approximately 30 per cent of people in the high-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression, seven per cent report diagnosed anxiety or depression in the moderate-risk group, and one per cent of people in the low-risk group report diagnosed anxiety or depression.



Mental Health Index sub-scores.

The lowest Mental Health Index sub-scores for the second consecutive period are anxiety (53.6), financial risk (57.7), and isolation (58.9). Depression (59.1), optimism (65.8), and work productivity (61.6) follow. General psychological health (69.3) continues to be the most favourable mental health measure.

- All mental health sub-scores have declined from January 2023
- The greatest decline is observed in the depression sub-score, decreasing 1.9 points from the prior period

Mental Health Index Sub-scores	April 2023	March 2023
Anxiety	53.6	54.7
Financial risk	57.7	58.2
Isolation	58.9	59.5
Depression	59.1	61.0
Optimism	65.8	66.8
Work productivity	61.6	63.0
Psychological health	69.3	70.1



Mental health by gender and age.

- The mental health score of women is 59.3 compared to 63.4 for men
- Mental health scores improve with age
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children is evident. Individuals with at least one child have a lower score (58.1) than individuals without children (62.9)

Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, nine per cent of respondents are unemployed¹ and 10 per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Unemployed people have the lowest mental health score (51.6), followed by individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month (52.5), individuals working fewer hours (53.7), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (62.8)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (62.7) than non-managers (60.3)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (57.1) than service (61.8) and office workers (61.6)
- Self-employed/sole proprietors have the highest mental health score (64.7)
- Respondents working for companies with 501-1,000 employees have the lowest mental health score (58.0)

Emergency savings

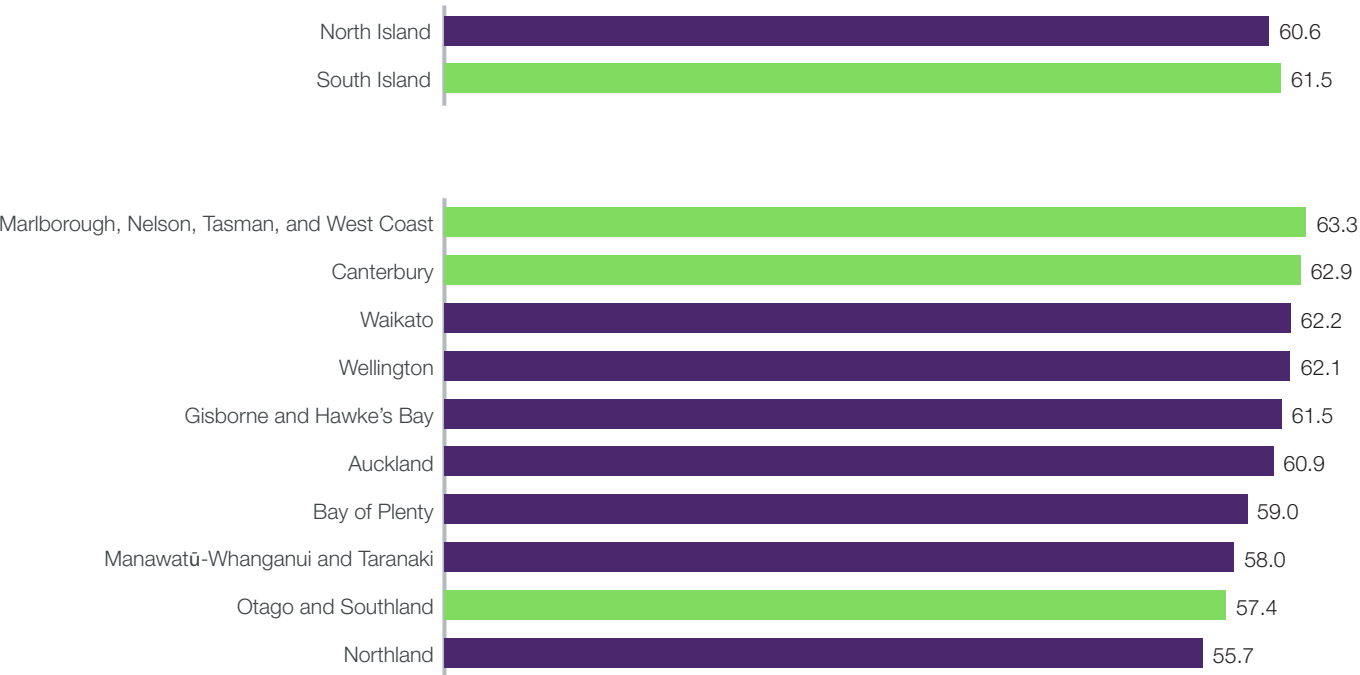
- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower mental health score (42.1) than the overall group (60.9). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 69.1

¹ MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

The Mental Health Index by region.

Mental health scores in all regions of New Zealand are significantly strained; scores are nearly equal overall across the North and South Islands.

The region with the lowest mental health score is Northland (55.7), followed by Otago/Southland (57.4), Manawat -Whanganui/ Taranaki (58.0), and Bay of Plenty (59.0). The region combining Marlborough, Nelson, Tasman, and West Coast has the highest mental health score (63.3), followed by Canterbury (62.9), and Waikato (62.2).



Employment status	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Employed (no change in hours/salary)	62.8	62.6
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	53.7	55.7
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	52.5	62.8
Not currently employed	51.6	59.7
Age group	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Age 20-29	53.5	55.5
Age 30-39	56.9	58.9
Age 40-49	63.9	60.8
Age 50-59	67.0	66.7
Age 60-69	74.4	72.9
Number of children	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
No children in household	62.9	63.3
1 child	56.6	58.9
2 children	58.7	61.0
3 children or more	61.4	57.4

Region	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Auckland	60.9	61.4
Bay of Plenty	59.0	59.7
Canterbury	62.9	64.1
Gisborne and Hawke's Bay	61.5	63.9
Manawat -Whanganui and Taranaki	58.0	58.7
Marlborough, Nelson, Tasman, and West Coast	63.3	62.5
Northland	55.7	64.2
Otago and Southland	57.4	58.7
Waikato	62.2	63.6
Wellington	62.1	62.6
Gender	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Men	63.4	64.8
Women	59.3	60.0
Household income	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
<\$30K/annum	51.8	56.6
\$30K to <\$60K/annum	54.9	55.3
\$60K to <\$100K	58.8	61.7
\$100K to <\$150K	64.4	64.4
\$150K or more	66.3	67.1

Employer size	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Self-employed/sole proprietor	64.7	63.1
2-50 employees	61.6	62.5
51-100 employees	61.2	60.1
101-500 employees	61.2	64.0
501-1,000 employees	58.0	60.7
1,001-5,000 employees	62.1	60.0
5,001-10,000 employees	63.6	61.3
More than 10,000 employees	63.5	63.0
Manager	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Manager	62.7	63.3
Non-manager	60.3	61.3
Work environment	Apr. 2023	Jan. 2023
Labour	57.1	-
Office/desk	61.6	-
Service	61.8	-

Numbers highlighted in pink are the most negative scores in the group.
Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

The Mental Health Index by industry.

Employees working in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation have the lowest mental health score (55.5) in April 2023, followed by individuals working in Food Services (55.8).

Respondents employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (67.0), Finance and Insurance (66.7), and Educational Services (64.9) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



Industry	April 2023	January 2023	Change
Media and Telecommunications	61.4	54.3	7.0
Food Services	55.8	51.2	4.7
Finance and Insurance	66.7	63.5	3.2
Administrative and Support services	56.9	54.3	2.6
Manufacturing	62.2	60.6	1.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	63.1	62.8	0.4
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	55.5	55.5	0.0
Other services (except Public Administration)	58.9	59.4	-0.5
Construction	61.2	62.1	-0.9
Retail Trade	57.8	58.8	-1.0
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	67.0	68.1	-1.1
Educational Services	64.9	67.4	-2.5
Other	56.7	59.5	-2.8
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	63.8	67.4	-3.6
Public Administration	62.3	66.3	-4.0
Transportation and Warehousing	59.2	63.9	-4.8
Wholesale Trade	60.2	65.5	-5.3
Technology	59.6	65.6	-6.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57.8	65.4	-7.6

Spotlight

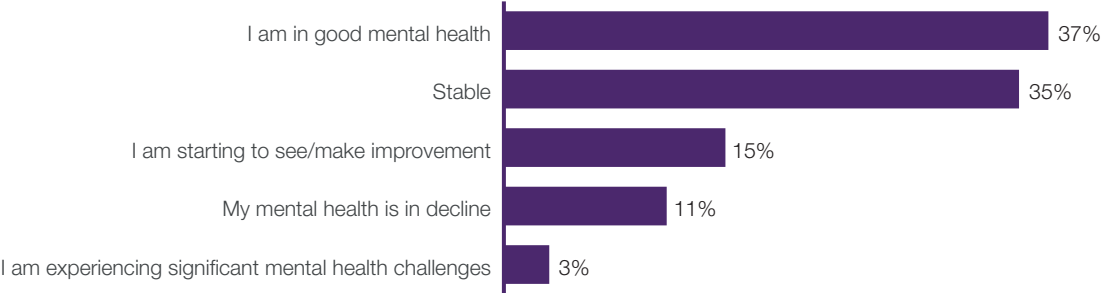
Self-reported mental health.

Workers in New Zealand were asked to describe their current mental health.

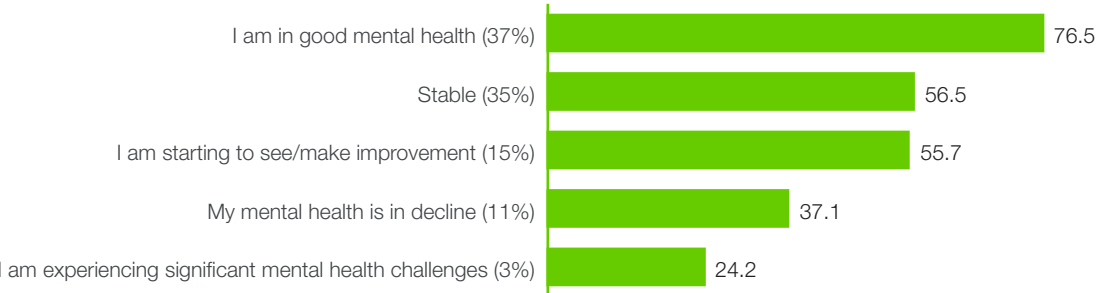
- One in seven (14 per cent) say their mental health is in decline or they are experiencing significant mental health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 39 or more points lower than workers reporting good mental health and 24 or more points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Parents are 40 per cent more likely than non-parents to report their mental health is in decline
- Individuals working as labourers are 50 per cent more likely than office workers to report their mental health is in decline
- Workers under 40 are three times more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their mental health
- More than two in five (45 per cent) self-report good mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (76.5), nearly 16 points higher than the national average (60.9)
- Workers older than 50 are twice as likely as workers under 40 to report being in good mental health



Current mental health



MHI score by “Current mental health”



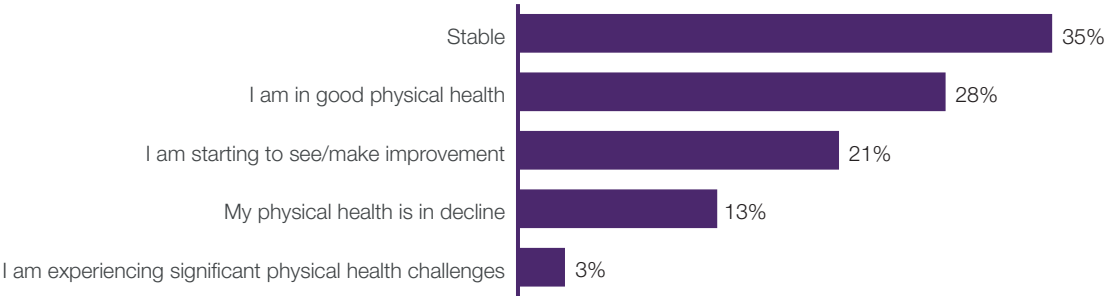
Self-reported physical health.

Workers in New Zealand were asked to describe their current physical health.

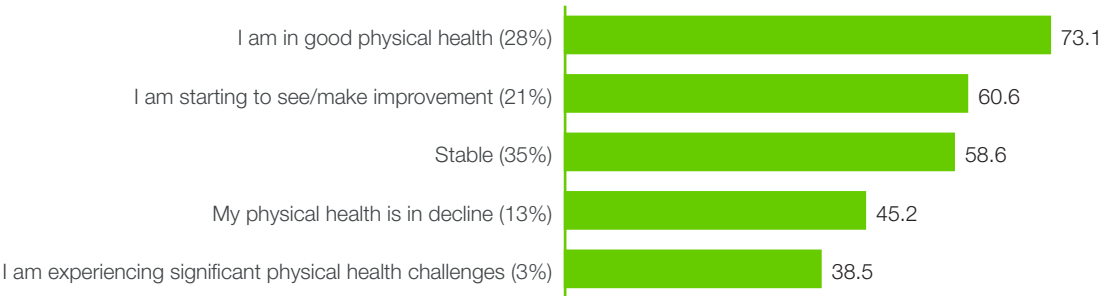
- One in six (16 per cent) say their physical health is in decline or they are experiencing significant physical health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 28 or more points lower than workers reporting good physical health and 16 or more points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers under 40 are two times more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their physical health
- More than one-quarter (28 per cent) self-report good physical health; this group has the highest mental health score (73.1), 12 points higher than the national average (60.9)



Current physical health



MHI score by “Current physical health”



Physical health effect on mental health.

Workers in New Zealand were asked whether physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health.

More than four in five (83 per cent) believe that physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (61.9), nearly 10 points higher than workers who disagree (52.0) and modestly above the national average (60.9)

Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health



MHI score by “Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health”



Workers in New Zealand were asked whether physical activity and good mental health are linked.

Nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) believe that physical activity and good mental health are linked; this group has the highest mental health score (61.7), six or more points higher than workers who are neutral or disagree, and slightly above the national average (60.9)

I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked



MHI score by “I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked”

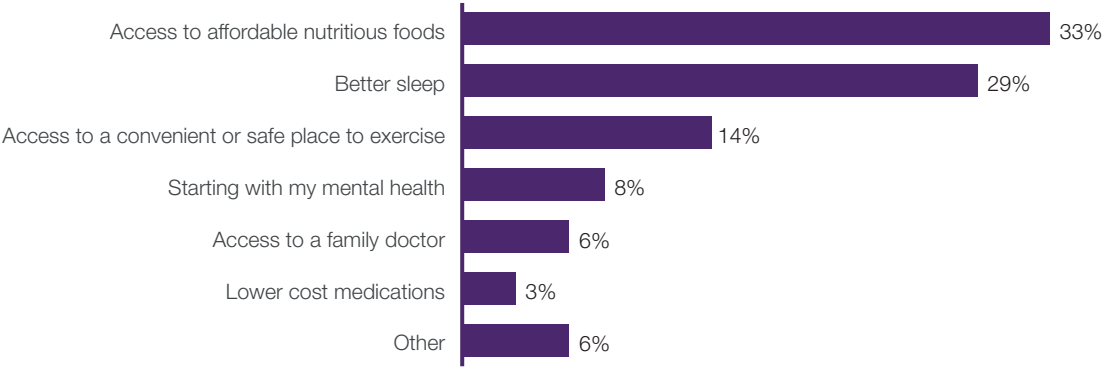


Workers in New Zealand were asked what would be most helpful in managing their physical health.

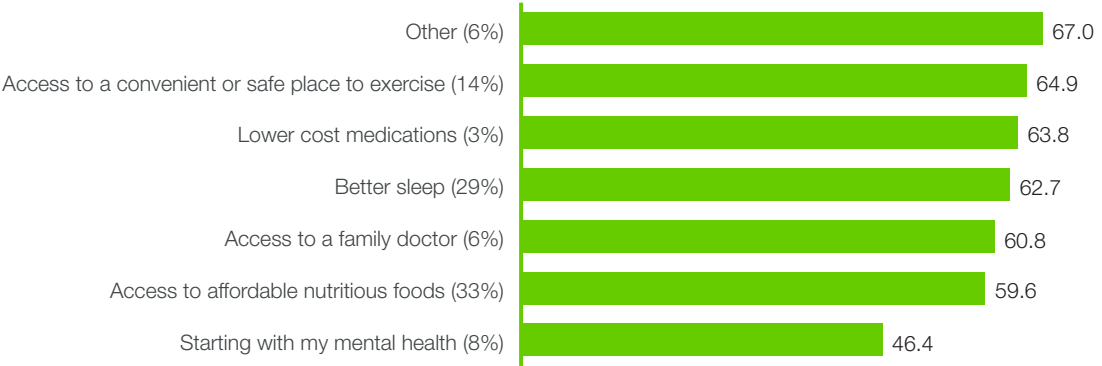
- One-third (33 per cent) report that access to affordable nutritious foods would be most helpful in managing their physical health, 29 per cent report better sleep and 14 per cent report access to a convenient or safe place to exercise as most helpful in managing their physical health
- Eight per cent said that starting with their mental health would be most helpful in managing their physical health; the mental health score of this group (46.4) is 14 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers under 40 are 80 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to say that access to affordable nutritious foods would be most helpful in managing their physical health



Most helpful in managing physical health



MHI score by “Most helpful in managing physical health”



Exercise

Workers in New Zealand were asked how frequently they exercise.

- Nearly one in five (18 per cent) do not exercise. The mental health score of this group (55.5) is 11 points lower than workers who exercise four or more times per week (66.6) and five points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers over 50 years are 40 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report not exercising
- Nearly one-third (29 per cent) exercise four or more times per week; this group has the highest mental health score (66.6), nearly six points higher than the national average (60.9)



How frequently do you exercise?



MHI score by “How frequently do you exercise?”

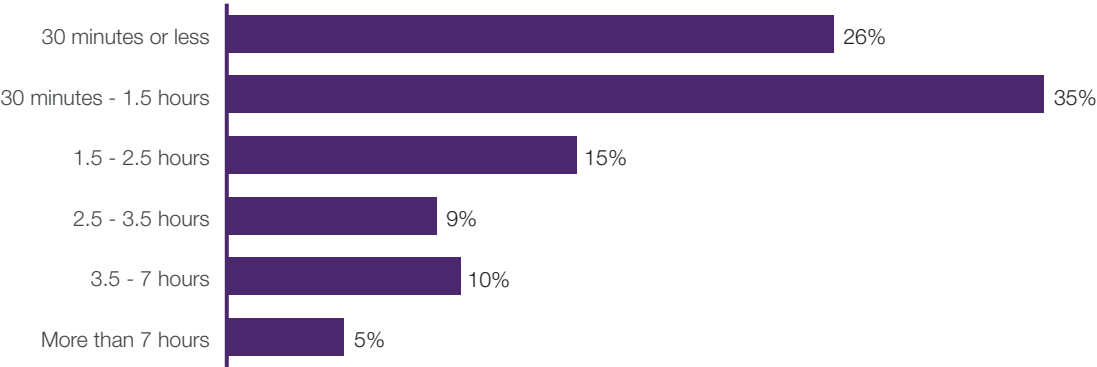


Workers in New Zealand who exercise were asked about their total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise in a typical week.

The highest mental health score (72.8) is among five per cent of workers reporting more than seven hours of moderate to vigorous exercise per week. The mental health score of this group (72.8) is 13 points higher than workers who report 30 minutes or less of moderate to vigorous exercise and 12 points higher than the national average (60.9).



Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise



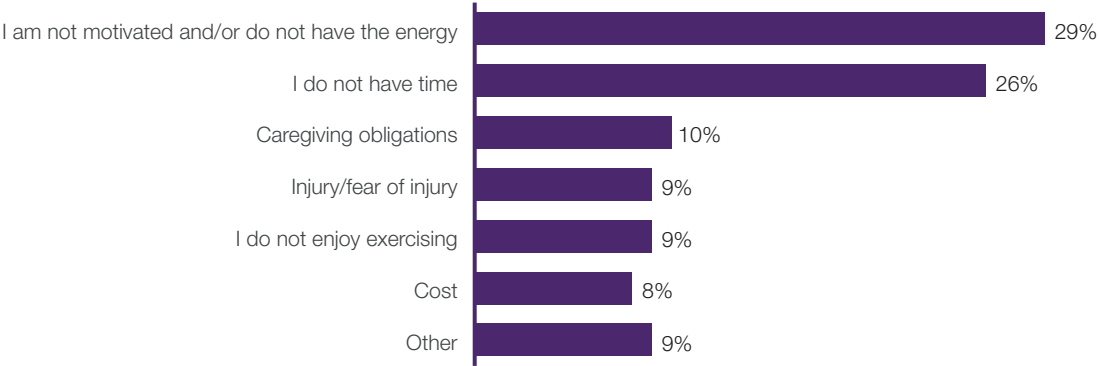
MHI score by “Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise”



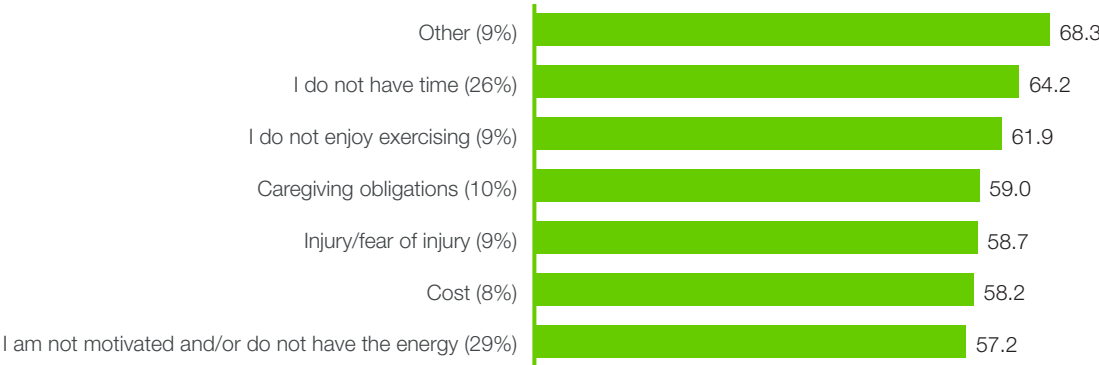
Workers in New Zealand were asked about the biggest barrier to exercising regularly.

- Nearly one-third (29 per cent) are not motivated and/or do not have the energy to exercise and 26 per cent say they do not have time to exercise regularly
- Nearly one in ten (eight per cent) say cost is the biggest barrier to exercising regularly; this group has a mental health score (58.2), nearly three points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Non-parents are more than twice as likely as parents to report not enjoying exercising

Biggest barrier to exercising regularly



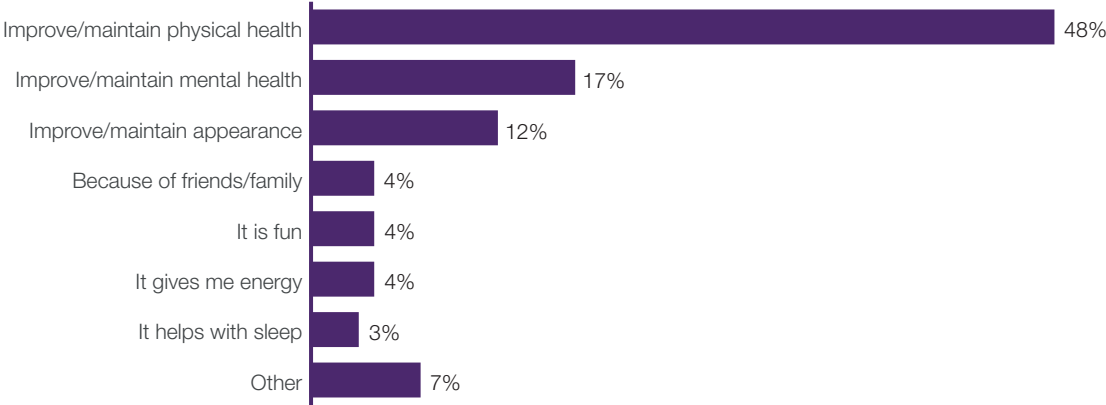
MHI score by “Biggest barrier to exercising regularly”



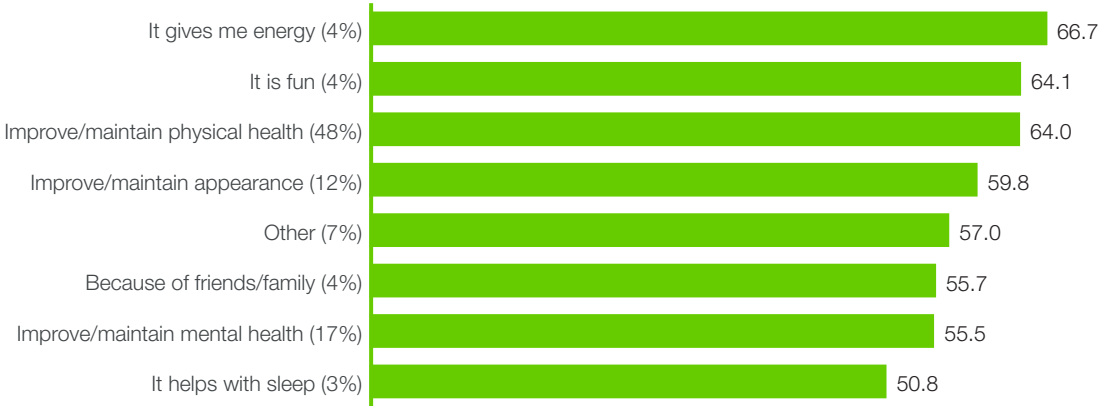
Workers in New Zealand were asked about the primary reason they exercise.

- Nearly half (48 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain physical health; this group has a mental health score (64.0), three points higher than the national average (60.9)
- One in six (17 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain their mental health; this group has the second lowest mental health score (55.5), five points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers under 40 are 50 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to exercise to improve/maintain their mental health
- Twelve per cent exercise to improve/maintain their appearance; the mental health of this group (59.8) is modestly lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers under 40 are 60 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to report exercising to improve/maintain their appearance

Primary reason for exercising



MHI score by “Primary reason for exercising”



Physical health issues that interfere with work.

Workers in New Zealand were asked whether they have a physical health issue that interferes with work.

- Nearly one in seven (13 per cent) have a physical health issue that interferes with work; this group has a mental health score (49.3), 13 points lower than workers not reporting a physical health issue that interferes with work (62.7) and nearly 12 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Labourers are two and half times more likely than office workers and 50 per cent more likely than workers in service industries to have a physical health issue that interferes with work



Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



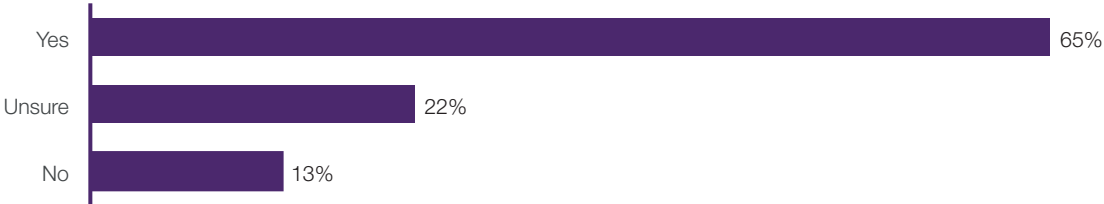
MHI score by “Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”



Workers in New Zealand reporting a physical health issue that interferes with their work were asked whether their employer is aware of the issue.

- Nearly one in seven (13 per cent) report their employer is unaware of their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (40.2) is nearly 21 points lower than the national average (60.9) and 12 points lower than workers whose employers are aware of their physical health issue
- More than one in five (22 per cent) are unsure whether their employer is aware of their physical health issue that impacts work. The mental health score of this group (46.1) is nearly 15 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) report their employer is aware of their physical health issue; despite this, the mental health score of this group (52.2) is nearly nine points lower than the national average (60.9)

Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



MHI score by “Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”

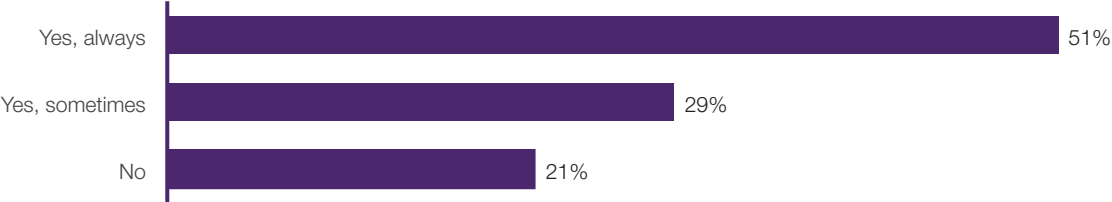


Workers in New Zealand whose employers are aware of their physical health issue that interferes with work were asked whether their employer is helpful managing work.

- More than one in five (21 per cent) report their employer is not helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (38.2) is nearly 23 points below the national average (60.9) and nearly 19 points lower than workers whose employers are always helpful (56.9)
- Women are nearly twice as likely as men to report their employer is not helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue
- Four in five (80 per cent) report that their employer is always or sometimes helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue; despite this support, the mental health score of this group is four or more points lower than the national average (60.9)



Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?



MHI score by “Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?”



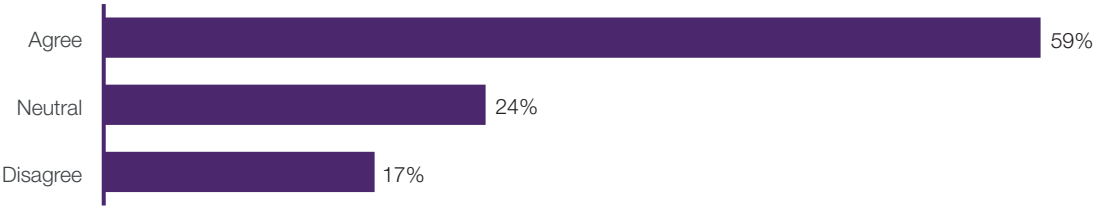
Satisfaction with healthcare.

Workers in New Zealand were asked whether they are satisfied with the level of healthcare available.

- One in six (17 per cent) are dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available; the mental health of this group is lowest (49.4), nearly 17 points lower than workers who are satisfied (66.0) and 11 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Women are nearly 50 per cent more likely than men to report being dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available
- Workers under 40 are 70 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to report being dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available
- Nearly three in five (59 per cent) are satisfied with the level of healthcare available; this group has the highest mental health score (66.0), five points higher than the national average (60.9)



I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me



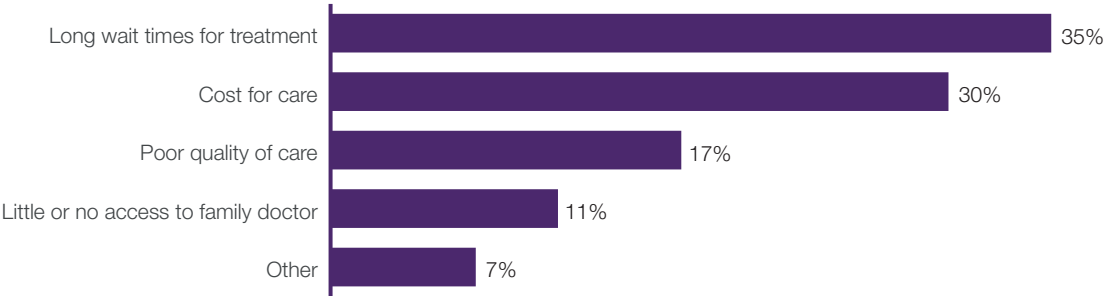
MHI score by “I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me”



Workers in New Zealand dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available were asked for the reason.

- Nearly half (46 per cent) are dissatisfied because of access to care; specifically, 35 per cent are dissatisfied because of long wait times for treatment and 11 per cent are dissatisfied because of little or no access to a family doctor
- The mental health scores of workers dissatisfied because of access to care are eight or more points lower than the national average (60.9)
- The mental health score of 17 per cent of workers reporting poor quality of care (46.9) is 14 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- The mental health score of 30 per cent of workers reporting dissatisfaction over the cost for care (48.5) is more than 12 points lower than the national average (60.9)
- Workers under 40 are 80 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to report cost of care as the reason for dissatisfaction

Reason for dissatisfaction



MHI score by “Reason for dissatisfaction”



Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly LifeWorks).

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

The Mental Health Index report has two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index (MHI).
2. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 1,000 people who live in New Zealand and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in New Zealand. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between April 3 and April 20, 2023.

Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

Distressed 0 - 49 **Strained** 50-79 **Optimal** 80 - 100

Additional data and analyses.

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses, are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group is available upon request.

Contact MHI@lifeworks.com





www.telushealth.com

