



Western Australian adults' weight loss intentions, influences, and strategies

In 2022, more than three-quarters of Western Australian adults were living with overweight (38 per cent) or obesity (38 per cent)¹. Between 2002 and 2020, the average body mass index (BMI) for adults living in Western Australia (WA) increased significantly. During the same period, the prevalence of adult obesity in WA almost doubled, the prevalence of healthy weight decreased, and overweight remained relatively stable².

For people above a healthy weight, a modest weight loss of 5 to 10 per cent of body weight can lead to clinically significant health benefits³.

Weight loss intentions of Western Australian adults:


Respondents were asked if they had intentionally 'tried', 'thought about trying', or 'not thought about trying' to lose weight in the previous 12 months (Table 1).

Overall results indicate:

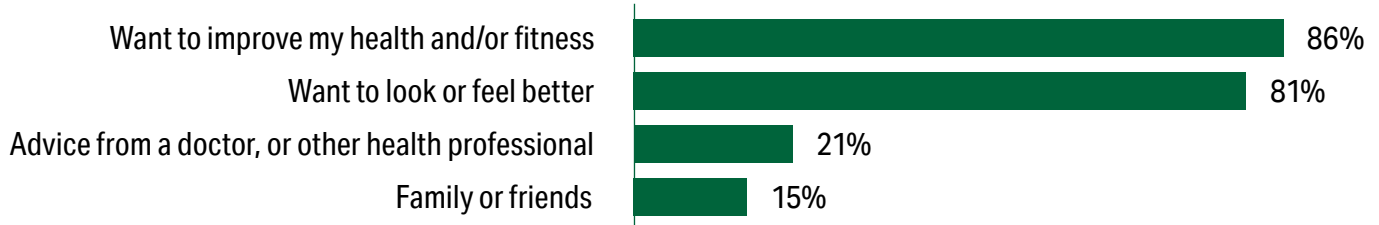


44 per cent of adults 'tried to lose weight' in the previous 12 months,
27 per cent of adults 'thought about trying to lose weight' in the previous 12 months,
29 per cent of adults had 'not thought about trying to lose weight' in the previous 12 months.

Table 1. Intentions of Western Australian adults to lose weight in the previous 12 months by age, gender, and BMI.

	Tried to lose weight	Thought about trying to lose weight	Have not thought about trying to lose weight
	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)
Age (years)			
18 to 34	39.6 (39.5 – 39.8)	23.8 (23.7 – 23.9)	36.6 (36.5 – 36.7)
35 to 49	44.3 (44.2 – 44.4)	28.3 (28.2 – 28.4)	26.3 (26.1 – 26.4)
50+	45.6 (45.5 – 45.7)	27.5 (27.4 – 27.6)	26.4 (26.3 – 26.5)
Sex			
Females	44.9 (44.8 – 45.0)	26.3 (26.2 – 26.4)	28.4 (28.3 – 28.5)
Males	41.9 (41.8 – 42.0)	27.1 (27.0 – 27.2)	30.2 (30.1 – 30.3)
BMI classification			
Healthy weight	21.8 (21.7 – 22.0)	21.5 (21.4 – 21.6)	56.5 (56.3 – 56.6)
Overweight	46.0 (45.9 – 46.1)	28.0 (27.9 – 28.1)	24.6 (24.5 – 24.7)
Obese	58.1 (58.0 – 58.2)	26.6 (26.5 – 26.7)	15.2 (15.1 – 15.3)

What influences Western Australian adults the most, to try to lose weight?



Successful weight loss in the previous 12 months:

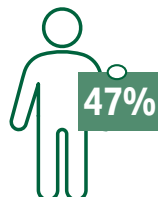
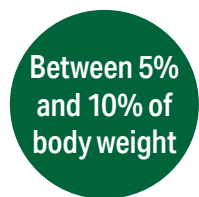
Respondents who had intentionally tried to lose weight in the previous 12 months were asked if they had been successful in doing so.

- Almost three quarters (74 per cent) of adults who tried to lose weight in the previous 12 months were successful in doing so.
- Adults aged 18 to 34 years (80 per cent) were more likely to have successfully lost weight in the previous 12 months compared to those aged 35 to 49 years (65 per cent), or 50 years and older (77 per cent).
- More than three quarters (77 per cent) of adults with overweight, and more than two thirds (67 per cent) of adults with obesity were successful in trying to lose weight in the previous 12 months.

Percentage of body weight Western Australian adults intentionally lost in the previous 12 months:



Adults aged 50 years and older (36 per cent), females (38 per cent), and adults with a healthy weight (55 per cent) were most likely to have intentionally lost less than 5 per cent of their body weight in the previous 12 months.



Adults aged 35 to 49 years (56 per cent), males (56 per cent), adults with obesity (50 per cent), adults with lower education levels (72 per cent), and those living in non-metropolitan areas (53 per cent) were most likely to have intentionally lost between 5 to 10 per cent of their body weight in the previous 12 months.



Adults aged 50 years and older (23 per cent), females (24 per cent), and adults with obesity (26 per cent) were most likely to have intentionally lost more than 10 per cent of their body weight in the previous 12 months.

Top ten most common strategies reported by those who intentionally lost 5 per cent or more of their body weight in the previous 12 months (respondents could select more than one answer):

1	Increased my exercise levels	75%
2	Cut down or stopped eating sugary food	61%
3	Started exercising	59%
4	Cut down or stopped eating takeaway food	58%
5	Regularly weighed myself	57%
6	Ate more vegetables	57%
7	Cut down or stopped snacking	54%
8	Cooked meals at home more often	54%
9	Used an electronic device to track my diet or exercise	47%
10	Ate more regular meals	40%

References

1. Epidemiology Directorate, 2023. Health and Wellbeing of Adults in Western Australia 2022. Department of Health, Western Australia
2. Epidemiology Directorate, 2021. Health and Wellbeing of Adults in Western Australia 2020, Overview and Trends. Department of Health, Western Australia.
3. Grima M, Dixon J B. (2013). Obesity Recommendations for Management in General Practice and Beyond. Australian Family Physician, 42(8). [Online] Available from:
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