

WOMEN AND CYCLING SURVEY 2013



Main Findings

Introduction

The 'Cycling and Women Survey' is the third annual survey conducted by the Heart Foundation and The Cycling Promotion Fund. The 2013 survey builds on the previous two surveys, 'Riding a bike for transport' (2011) and 'Active travel to school' (2012).

Riding a Bike

Close to one in three women surveyed reported they had ridden a bike in the past six months. In comparison as children, close to 90% reported they had ridden a bike. Women aged 18 to 39 were three times more likely to have ridden a bike in the past six months than women aged 60 and over.

For women who reported they have ridden a bike in the past six months, the majority did so for either fun or exercise. Overall, only 7% of women surveyed rode a bike for transport purposes.

Women who reported not having ridden a bike in the past six months were more than twice as likely to report they were dissatisfied with their health and their health was fair or poor.

When asked whether they participate in indoor cycling, more than one in three respondents reported they cycle indoors (i.e. exercise bikes), with women living in metropolitan areas significantly more likely to do so. Furthermore, more than 60% of respondents who reported they participate in indoor cycling do not ride a bike outdoors.

Overall, 60% of women reported they would likely to cycle more than they currently do. More than three quarters of women with 78% of those who currently cycle and more than 50% of women who hadn't cycled in the past six months would like to cycle more than they do.

Attitudes and Perceptions

Respondents ranked 'health and fitness', 'getting outside' and 'fun and enjoyment' as the most important factors in why they would ride a bike.

Fashion seems to have a bearing on women's perceptions towards cycling, with the majority believing its hard to cycle in skirts/dresses. In addition, one in three women perceive cycling clothes as unfashionable and a similar proportion feel wearing a helmet ruins a woman's hairstyle.

The overwhelming majority feel its socially acceptable for women to ride a bike. More than half of women surveyed stated riding a bike is seen as acceptable by their friends, with younger women under the age of 40 and those who currently ride more likely to agree their friends see it as acceptable to ride.

Barriers and Enablers

There was not one clear stand out reason that women believe prevents them (or other women) from cycling. One in ten women reported lacking confidence in riding a bike, along with lack of time to get on a bike. When asked to nominate all reasons that prevent women from cycling, traffic and aggression from other road users featured prominently.

The main safety concerns amongst women associated with cycling (aside from personal safety) involved traffic and cars, with speed and volume of cars/trucks, and distracted drivers being the major safety concerns.

Women generally feel having more as well as separate bike paths to cycle on would entice women to cycle more. This view was consistent amongst all women, irrespective of whether women had cycled in the past six months or not, their age or residential location.

The overwhelming majority of women agree that government should improve cycling facilities by providing more bike paths and/or lanes, consistent with the view that having more bike lanes and off-road cycling paths would entice more women to ride.

Demographics & Methodology

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In February 2013, the National Heart Foundation of Australia in partnership with the Cycling Promotion Fund conducted an online survey with a random sample of 1,007 Australian women aged 18 and over, in relation to women and cycling.

ACCURACY OF RESULTS

This survey was based on a sample of Australian women. As it is not a census, some level of error is inherent in the results. This error can be quantified statistically to give a margin of error - essentially, this means that, with 95% confidence, a given range contains the true result at a population level.

The error margin was 3.1%, meaning that, with 95% confidence, a result, plus or minus the error margin (i.e. 50% \pm 3.1%), contains the true result at the population level.

Age	
18 to 24	13.8%
25 to 29	10.0%
30 to 34	8.9%
35 to 39	9.4%
40 to 44	8.9%
45 to 49	8.0%
50 to 54	8.6%
55 to 59	7.7%
60 to 64	6.8%
65 to 69	11.9%
Over 70	5.8%

Location	
Adelaide	5.6%
Rest of South Australia	1.5%
Brisbane	9.7%
Rest of Queensland	10.7%
Canberra/ACT	1.4%
Darwin	0.5%
Rest of Northern Territory	0.6%
Hobart	0.9%
Rest of Tasmania	2.1%
Melbourne	19.2%
Rest of Victoria	5.8%
Perth	8.3%
Rest of Western Australia	2.0%
Sydney	20.1%
Rest of NSW	11.7%

Household Status	
Adult living at home with parent(s)	8.2%
Couple living with their child(ren)	30.3%
Couple only	32.5%
Group household	5.6%
Other (please specify)	3.2%
Person living alone	14.0%
Single person living with their child	6.1%

Total Household Income	
Below \$25,000	13.9%
Between \$25,000 to \$40,000	18.2%
Between \$40,001 to \$80,000	32.1%
Between 80,001 to \$120,000	22.4%
Over \$120,001	13.3%

CYCLING BEHAVIOUR

Personal Health & Participation In Physical Activities

Whilst the majority of women surveyed were likely to rate their health as either 'good' or 'very good', at least one in five rated their health as 'fair' or 'poor'.

Women with low household income (less than \$40,000), women aged 60 and over and those living in regional/rural areas were more likely to report their health as 'fair' or 'poor'.

Just over half of the women surveyed were satisfied with their health. However, close to one in four women reported that they were dissatisfied with their health.

Twice as many women with low household income reported they were dissatisfied with their health compared to women with household income of more than \$80,000.

The majority of women surveyed reported they regularly walk, with younger women (aged 18 to 39) and those with high household income (more than \$80,000) more likely to regularly walk.

Other common physical activities women reported they regularly participate in included swimming, attending the gym and running.

Would you say your health is...?

Excellent	5.2%
Very good	34.0%
Good	37.3%
Fair	17.3%
Poor	6.1%

How satisfied are you with your overall health?

Very satisfied	7.2%
Satisfied	46.0%
Neither	21.4%
Dissatisfied	19.9%
Very Dissatisfied	5.4%

Physical activities you regularly do...

	%
Walking	77.1%
Swimming	20.3%
Going to the gym	19.6%
Jogging/running	15.3%
Cycling	14.2%
Dancing	9.6%
Yoga	9.4%
Pilates	6.1%
Playing tennis	3.3%
Netball	2.8%
Golf	2.1%
Other	12.9%

Riding As A Child

More than 85% of women surveyed stated they owned a bicycle as a child, with women aged 18 to 39 significantly more likely than women aged 60 and over to report they owned a bike as a child.

Close to 90% of women stated they had ridden a bicycle as a child, with women aged 18 to 39 significantly more likely than women aged 60 and over.

There was no difference for women living in metropolitan areas compared to those in regional/rural.

Of the women who reported they had ridden a bicycle as a child, more than 90% stated they rode at least once a week.

There was little difference for women living in metropolitan areas compared to those in regional/rural.

Did you own a bike as a child?	
Yes	85.1%
No	14.9%

Did you ride a bike as a child?	
Yes	89.6%
No	10.4%

How often did you ride a bike as a child?	
Every day	54.5%
At least once a week	36.1%
At least once a month	5.3%
At least once in three months	2.1%
At least once in six months	0.8%
At least once a year	0.8%
Other	0.4%

Riding A Bike

More than half of the women surveyed rated their level of riding experience as 'intermediate'.

Women living in metropolitan areas were significantly more likely to rate their level of experience as 'beginner'. Women aged 40 and over and those living in regional/rural areas were more likely to state they were experienced riders.

Just over one in three women currently own a bike, compared to more than 85% as a child.

An additional 15% (or one in six) don't own a bike but have access to a bike. Respondents aged 18 to 39 were significantly more likely to own a bike than respondents aged 60 and over (2.5 times more likely). Respondents with household income of less than \$40,000 were significantly less likely to own a bike than those with household income over \$40,000. There was marginal difference in ownership for respondent in metropolitan compared to regional/rural areas.

Close to one in three women surveyed reported they had ridden a bike in the past six months. As children, close to 90% had ridden a bike at least once every six months. Respondents aged 18 to 39 were significantly more likely to have ridden a bike in the past six months than respondents aged 60 and over (three times more likely).

Women who reported they haven't ridden a bike in the past six months were more than twice as likely to report they were dissatisfied with their health and their health was fair or poor.

For the 30% of women who reported they have ridden a bike in the past six months, the majority reported they did so for either fun or exercise. Overall, only 7% of all women surveyed rode a bike for transport purposes.

Of the 70% of women who reported they have not ridden a bike in the past six months, the majority reported the last time they did so was at least 10 years prior.

Women who last rode more than 10 years ago or have never ridden a bike were significantly more likely to report they were dissatisfied with their health and their health was fair or poor

Your level of riding experience...

Beginner	25.5%
Intermediate	54.5%
Experienced	14.3%
Don't know how to ride	5.7%

Do you currently own or have access to a bike?

Yes, own a bike	34.7%
Yes, have access to a bike	14.9%
No	50.4%

Have you ridden a bike in the past 6 months?

Yes	30.2%
No	69.8%

Do you ride for...?

Fun	74.0%
Exercise	71.7%
Transport	26.0%
Competition	0.7%
Other	1.3%

When was the last time you rode a bike?

Between 6 months to one year ago	7.0%
Between 1 to 2 years ago	15.1%
Between 3 to 5 years ago	16.9%
Between 6 to 10 years ago	13.7%
More than 10 years ago	40.0%
Never ridden a bike	7.4%

Riding For Transport

For the respondents who reported they have cycled in the past six months for transport, the overwhelming majority ride between once a week or once a month.

Less than ten percent of women who ride for transport (or 0.6% of all respondents) reported they ride every day.

Respondents were likely to report they cycle mainly on quiet roads, followed by shared footpaths and on-road bicycle lanes.

Only one in twenty reported they cycle on busy roads that have no bike lanes.

For those who cycle for transport purposes, more than half ride to shops, followed by running errands and to leisure/recreational facilities.

One in three who cycle for transport purposes do so to work. This equates to 2.3% of total respondents.

How often you cycle for transport?

Every day	8.9%
At least once a week	39.2%
At least once a month	34.2%
At least once in three months	10.1%
Once in the six months	7.6%

Did you mainly ride on...?

Quiet roads	30.4%
On-road bicycle lanes	21.5%
Shared paths (pedestrians and bicycles)	21.5%
Off-road bicycle path	11.4%
Footpaths	7.6%
Busy roads (no bike lanes)	5.1%
Other	2.5%

Which destinations do you ride to...?

Shops	54.4%
Errands	45.6%
Leisure and recreational facilities	36.7%
Work	32.9%
Socialising	30.4%
School/University/TAFE	22.8%
To/from train/bus	11.4%
Other	6.3%

Riding For Fun Or Exercise

Most of the respondents who reported they cycle for fun do so at least once a month. However, fewer than 4% of respondents cycle each day.

Respondents who cycle for fun were most likely to do so on shared paths or quiet roads.

Very few respondents reported they mainly cycle on busy roads.

How often you cycle for fun?

Every day	3.6%
At least once a week	33.8%
At least once a month	30.7%
At least once in three months	19.6%
Once in the six months	12.4%

Did you mainly ride on...?

Shared paths	34.2%
Quiet roads	30.7%
Parks	13.8%
Footpaths	11.6%
Road bicycle lanes	4.0%
Busy roads (no bike lanes)	3.1%
Other	2.7%

Most of the respondents who reported they cycle for exercise do so at least once a month.

One in eleven respondents cycle each day.

How often you cycle for exercise?

Every day	8.4%
At least once a week	41.8%
At least once a month	26.2%
At least once in three months	11.6%
Once in the six months	8.9%

Shared paths and quiet roads were the main areas women ride for exercise.

Very few respondents reported they mainly cycle on busy roads.

Did you mainly ride on...?

Shared paths	36.7%
Quiet roads	31.7%
Footpaths	10.1%
Other	9.6%
Road bicycle lanes	8.3%
Busy roads (no bike lanes)	3.7%

Indoor Cycling

More than one in three respondents reported they participate in indoor cycling. Respondents living in metropolitan areas were significantly more likely to report participating in indoor cycling than those living in regional/rural locations.

Furthermore, more than 60% of respondents who reported they participate in indoor cycling do not ride a bike outdoors.

Convenience and comfort were the main reasons respondents choose to ride indoors. Other reasons reported by women for riding indoors were related to safety and traffic.

Only one in five felt they were not confident in ride a bike outside.

Do you participate in indoor cycling?	
Yes	36.8%
No	62.8%

Why do you choose to ride indoors...?	
Convenient way to exercise	63.9%
In the comfort of my home	41.2%
Weather	33.4%
Safety reasons	23.5%
Riding is for health, not transport	22.6%
Not confident riding a bike outside	22.6%
Cars and/or traffic	21.6%
Not fit enough to go outside	13.2%
Lack of bicycle paths where I live and/or work	10.8%
Together with friends/socialising	6.5%
Other	9.7%

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

Importance Of Cycling

Respondents ranked 'health and fitness', 'getting outside' and 'fun and enjoyment' the most important factors in why they would ride a bike. Only one in three women rated riding a bike as a convenient form of transport or to avoid congestion as either very or quite important.

How important are the following factors in why you ride a bicycle?

	Very Important	Quite Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not Important At All
Avoiding congestion	13.1%	18.1%	25.3%	17.1%	26.4%
Building physical activity into busy lifestyle	23.6%	33.0%	24.6%	7.7%	11.0%
Convenient form of transport	14.6%	20.8%	25.7%	15.5%	23.4%
Environmentally friendly	26.6%	28.8%	22.2%	10.4%	11.9%
Fun and enjoyment	26.9%	33.5%	22.4%	7.5%	9.6%
Getting outside in the fresh air	30.2%	32.8%	20.9%	6.6%	9.6%
Health and fitness	39.0%	32.5%	18.4%	3.8%	6.4%
Low cost form of transport	20.6%	24.0%	21.4%	12.1%	21.9%
Relaxation and/or stress reduction	20.6%	30.5%	26.0%	10.8%	12.1%
Social aspect	9.4%	16.9%	23.6%	21.5%	28.5%
Something I can do with my family/children	20.4%	25.7%	22.4%	11.4%	20.1%
Time out for myself	17.5%	26.1%	24.8%	14.0%	17.6%

The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that riding a bike is a good way to get fit and that it is important for children to learn how to ride. Similarly, the majority of respondents also agreed that road traffic makes people afraid to ride.

Three in five respondents reported they would like to cycle more than they currently do, with 78% of respondents who reported cycling in the past six months reported they would like to cycle more. Furthermore, more than 50% of respondents who hadn't cycled in the past six months would like to do so.

How important are the following factors in why you ride a bicycle?

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure
Cycling is a good way to get fit.	91.5%	7.1%	0.7%	0.6%
It is important for children to learn to ride a bike.	90.9%	7.2%	1.3%	0.5%
Road traffic makes people afraid of cycling.	84.4%	11.0%	3.3%	1.3%
Cycling is a convenient way of getting around.	69.0%	21.5%	8.8%	0.6%
Cycling is a safe way of getting around.	34.4%	33.1%	31.7%	0.8%
Cycling is enjoyable.	74.5%	19.2%	4.9%	1.4%
Cycling is a family activity.	71.9%	22.7%	4.3%	1.1%
Cycling is for everybody.	52.2%	24.3%	22.4%	1.2%
I would like to cycle more than I am now.	61.0%	21.0%	15.8%	2.2%

Perceptions Towards Cycling

Women were four times more likely to view riding a bike during the day as safe, compared to riding a bike at night. Fashion seems to have a bearing on women's perceptions towards cycling, with the majority believing it's hard to cycle in skirts/dresses. In addition, one in three women perceive cycling clothes are not fashionable and a similar proportion feel wearing a helmet ruins a woman's hairstyle.

The overwhelming majority feel it's socially acceptable for women to ride a bike. More than half of the respondents stated riding a bike is seen as acceptable by their friends, with women under the age of 40 and those who have ridden a bike in the past six months significantly more likely to agree their friends see it as acceptable to ride.

Perceptions and Acceptance

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure
It is socially acceptable for women to ride a bike	85.9%	10.6%	2.5%	1.0%
It is hard for women to cycle in skirts and dresses	81.9%	12.0%	5.6%	0.6%
It is safe for women to ride a bike during the day	70.8%	21.8%	6.3%	1.1%
Cycling is seen as acceptable by my girlfriends	54.6%	34.0%	6.8%	4.7%
Wearing a helmet ruins a woman's hairstyle	38.9%	27.0%	33.1%	1.0%
Cycling clothes are fashionable	23.0%	39.2%	36.1%	1.7%
It is safe for women to ride a bike at night	16.1%	23.0%	59.0%	1.9%

Women generally felt it was more difficult for women to ride as much as men due to safety issues/dealing with traffic and riding a bike not providing the capacity to transport children. One in six felt women rode less as they were discouraged from cycling due to the required apparel.

Why do men cycle more than women...?

	?
Personal Safety	17.6%
Women need to transport children	16.9%
Clothing not fashionable	14.8%
Other	12.4%
Men have more time	10.9%
Easier/more suitable for men	7.2%
Don't Know	6.8%
Women are more busy	6.6%
More a man's sport	5.8%
Don't like to be sweaty / make-up	5.0%
Men deal with traffic better	4.6%
Cannot carry bags/items	3.7%
Prefer other forms of exercise	2.9%
Cycling is not 'ladylike'	1.3%

BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

Preventing Women From Riding

There was not one clear stand out reason women believe prevents them (or other women) from cycling. One in ten women reported lacking confidence in riding a bike, along with lack of time to get on a bike.

When asked to nominate other reasons that prevent women from cycling, traffic and aggression from other road users featured prominently.

Reasons that prevents women from cycling...?	Main Reason	Other Reason(s)
Lack of confidence in cycling ability	10.0%	31.2%
Lack of time	10.0%	35.8%
Lack of fitness	9.1%	31.4%
Speed/Volume of traffic	8.2%	43.4%
Getting hot and sweaty/having to wear special clothes	7.6%	33.6%
Aggression/abuse from other road users	7.1%	38.8%
Lack of bike paths/lanes	7.1%	33.8%
Inability to carry children or other passengers	6.3%	27.3%
Live too far from school, work, shops etc	5.9%	27.3%
Being involved in an accident	5.8%	35.3%
Inability to carry more stuff	4.0%	37.1%
Darkness/Weather conditions	3.1%	41.2%
Inhaling car fumes when cycling on the road	2.8%	25.7%
Lack of showers and/or locker at destination	2.3%	23.5%
Unable to change a flat tyre	0.4%	18.8%
Other	10.3%	6.0%

The main safety concerns amongst women associated with cycling (aside from personal safety) involved traffic and cars, with speed and volume of cars/trucks, and distracted drivers.

Women's safety concerns were consistent, irrespective of whether they currently cycle or not, or their residential location.

Safety concerns associated with cycling?	Main Concern	Other Concern(s)
Personal safety	21.7%	43.3%
Speed of cars	21.3%	67.0%
Volume of cars	16.9%	56.7%
Distracted driving	9.4%	51.7%
Moving trucks and buses	8.7%	58.2%
Motorists who run red lights and stop signs	6.1%	46.0%
Parked cars opening doors	3.9%	46.4%
Somebody stealing my bike while it's parked	2.5%	21.0%
Crossing at intersections	2.4%	39.8%
Pedestrians stepping out in front of me	1.0%	30.4%
Other cyclists	0.6%	11.9%
None of the above	2.3%	2.0%
Other	3.3%	1.8%

Encouraging More Women To Ride

Women generally feel having more as well as separate bike paths to cycle on would entice women to cycle more. The view amongst women was consistent, irrespective of whether women had cycled in the past six months or not, their age or residential location.

Whilst traffic speeds was a prominent factor that prevents women from cycling and was also a safety concern, very few women felt reducing the traffic speeds would entice women to ride.

The overwhelming majority of women agree that government should improve cycling facilities by providing more bike paths and/or lanes. This is consistent with having more bike lanes and off-road cycling paths that would entice more women to ride.

Surprisingly, only half of the respondents agreed that government should change road rules to make cycling safer, despite speed and traffic being a safety concern and barrier for women to ride.

What would encourage women to cycle more?	Main Reason	Other Reason(s)
Completely separated off-road cycling paths	32.3%	47.8%
More bike lanes / Wider lanes on the roads	16.2%	47.7%
Female friendly bicycles	7.4%	26.8%
Organised social cycling events	6.4%	19.1%
Availability of showers	4.9%	23.9%
Not having to wear helmets	4.1%	11.1%
Better connectivity / more direct routes	3.6%	30.3%
Good local bike maps or website so I could check out and plan my routes	3.6%	29.2%
Availability of lockers and/or secure bike parking at destination	2.5%	26.0%
Better lighting along routes	2.5%	35.0%
Reduced traffic speeds	2.4%	20.1%
None of the above	11.0%	10.2%
Other	3.3%	3.4%

Government should...?

	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure
Improve cycling facilities (i.e. bike paths/lanes)	87.6%	9.4%	2.5%	0.5%
Provide cycling education programs	70.7%	22.8%	5.4%	1.1%
Conduct a 'share the road' campaign	65.5%	23.6%	10.0%	0.9%
Conduct driver education campaign on how to interact safely with cyclists	70.8%	20.1%	8.1%	1.1%
Change road rules to make cycling safer	53.5%	31.0%	14.0%	1.5%