

# Health Trends

## Current Culture Makes It Hard For People To Exercise, Four Out Of Five Americans Say

*People Want the Government to Do More to Promote Physical Activity*

(NAPSA)—Overworked? Over-scheduled? Overloaded? Feel like you're taking care of everything and everyone but yourself? You may not be alone.

According to a survey recently released by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), 99 percent of Americans believe that exercise helps preserve good health. Yet most feel they have to battle current culture to exercise regularly. A full 79 percent say the current culture in America, including the pressures of work, family and financial demands, makes it hard for people to exercise regularly and maintain healthy lifestyles.

"Virtually all Americans view exercise as a critical component of preventive health care," says Joe Moore, President and CEO, IHRSA. "But most are losing the struggle to balance the demands of work and family with personal health—and they need greater support."

More than eight in 10 Americans say it would make it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routine if employers had programs to encourage exercise. And more than three-fifths of Americans believe the government should do more to promote physical activity.

The Workforce Health Improvement Program (WHIP) Act (H.R. 1748 and S. 1038) could make a difference to many. This legislation promotes wellness in the workforce by making fitness center memberships tax-free for employees when provided as an employee benefit. Current law requires workers to pay income tax on such wellness benefits.



**More than three-fifths of Americans believe the government should do more to promote physical activity.**

Diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S. and account for the vast majority of health care spending. Research has shown that exercise is a key factor in preventing chronic disease.

"If we're to make any meaningful progress in improving America's health and controlling the cost of health care, we need to create a national environment that supports health," says Moore. "That starts with federal initiatives—like WHIP—that remove the barriers to exercise and other forms of preventive health care."

Three-quarters of Americans say they'd encourage their member of Congress to vote to pass WHIP. Are you one of them? To encourage your member of Congress to pass WHIP, visit [www.healthclubs.com](http://www.healthclubs.com) and click on "Take Action!" under "Exercise Your Rights!"—or link directly to <http://www.voterveice.net/Groups/IHRSA/Advocacy/?IssueID=5554&SiteID=1>.