

**CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING**

# **A Study on How Canadians Perceive Their Body Weight**

## **Executive Report**

July 13, 2001



## 1.0 Study Report

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- ◆ **Close to seven out of ten individuals who have lost weight by following a diet have gained back the lost pounds?**



Q- After following your diet(s), did you gain back the weight you had lost?

(n=)	YES	NO	DNK/Refusal
406	68.3%	30.4%	1.3%

- ◆ **Close to four out of ten Canadians never worry about their weight while more than half regularly watch their weight.**

Q- Can you tell if you...regularly watch your weight, control your food intake as soon as you exceed a certain weight or do you never worry about your weight at all?

(n=)	Regularly watch their weight	Control their food intake when they exceed a certain weight	Never worry about their weight	Don't know/Refusal
1504	43.0 %	15.2 %	40.9 %	0.9 %

- ◆ **Close to one-third of Canadians think they are overweight.**

Q- Right now, do you find yourself to be overweight, underweight or the ideal weight?

(n=)	Overweight	Underweight	Ideal Weight	Don't know/Refusal
1504	35.3 %	5.1 %	58.4 %	1.3 %

- ◆ On average, individuals who think they are overweight have 23.6 lbs. to lose.

Q- Approximately how many pounds do you need to lose?

(n=)	10 lbs. or less	Between 11 and 20 lbs.	20 lbs. and more	Don't know/ Refusal
531	25.8 %	36.8 %	34.2 %	3.1 %

- ◆ More than one quarter of the population has already followed a weight-loss program.

Q- Have you ever followed a weight -loss program?

(n=)	YES	NO	Don't know/ Refusal
1504	46.3%	27.1%	26.6

- ◆ On average, Canadians who have followed a weight-loss program did so more than four times.

Q- In your lifetime, how many times have you followed a weight -loss program?

(n=)	Once	Twice	Three to four times	Five times or more	Don't know/ Refusal
406	26.6 %	20.4 %	19.8 %	25.8 %	7.5 %

- ◆ Canadians are more likely to diet for health reasons.

Q- For you personally, is following a weight -loss program important in terms of your image or your health?

(n=)	Image	Health	DNK/Refusal
406	14.9%	81.3%	3.8 %

## 2.0 Results

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### 2.1 Close to Two-Thirds of Individuals Who Followed One or More Diets Gained the Weight Back Afterwards

A total of 68.3% of individual who followed one or more weight-loss programs gained back the weight they had lost while dieting.

This is particularly true for 80.3% of individuals in the 55 to 64-age group, 76.4% of those who stay home and 80.6% of those who have been on five or more diets in their lifetime.

Quebeckers who had followed one or more weight-loss programs were more likely to have kept the weight off compared to other Canadians (56.6%). Men were also less likely to have gained the weight back (59.9%).

Q6 After following your diet(s), did you gain back the weight you had lost? N = 406	YES	NO	DNK / Refusal
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	64.8 %	35.2 %	0 %
<b>Quebec</b>	56.6 %	40.0 %	3.4 %
<b>Ontario</b>	70.4 %	29.0 %	0.6 5
<b>Prairies</b>	77.4 %	22.6 %	0 %
<b>Alberta</b>	77,6 %	19,4 %	3,1%
<b>British Columbia</b>	76,3 %	23,7 %	0 %
<b>Canada</b>	68,3 %	30,4 %	1,3 %

## 2.2 Four out of Ten Canadians Never Worry About Their Weight

A total of 40.9% of Canadians never worry about their weight while 43.0% mentioned that they regularly watch their weight and 15.2% mentioned that they control their food intake once they exceed a certain weight.

Overall, 52.0% of women regularly watch their weight while 51.1% of men never do.

British Columbians tend to watch their weight more than other Canadians (48.2%) while more Albertans never worry about theirs (45.7%).

Those who do watch their weight are individuals who feel they are overweight (59.3%), those who have 10 lbs. or less to lose (69.7%), those who previously followed five or more diets (69.8%) and those who gained the weight back after following the program (67.6%).

Canadians who never worry about their weight are manual workers (60.3%), individuals aged 18 to 24 (58.9%) and respondents who find they are underweight (69.3%).

Q1 Q-Can you tell if you...regularly watch your weight, control your food intake as soon as you exceed a certain weight or do you never worry about your weight at all?  N = 1504	Regularly watch weight	Control food intake when exceed certain weight	Never worry about weight	DNK/ Refusal
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	43.1 %	15.5 %	39.9 %	1.6 %
<b>Quebec</b>	41.4 %	19.8 %	38.3 %	0.5 %
<b>Ontario</b>	43.8 %	14.4 %	40.9 %	0.8 %
<b>Prairies</b>	38.9 %	15.3 %	44.0 %	1.8 %
<b>Alberta</b>	39.4 %	14.1 %	45.7 %	0.7 %
<b>British Columbia</b>	48.2 %	9.4 %	41.0 %	1.4 %
<b>Canada</b>	43.0 %	15.2 %	40.9 %	1.0 %

### 2.3 More than one-third of Canadians feel they are overweight

Although 58.4% of Canadians feel they have the ideal weight, a proportion of 35.3% of them feel they are overweight and 5.1% feel they are underweight.

A greater number of those who feel they are overweight are women (41.7%), individuals in the 45 to 54-age bracket (44.6%), residents of Atlantic Canada (41.5%), individuals who stay home (44.4%) or those without a job (48.3%).

The 18 to 24 year olds are more likely to say they have the ideal weight (70.1%).

Q2 Right now, do you find yourself to be overweight, underweight or the ideal weight? N =1504	Overweight	Underweight	Ideal weight	DNK / Refusal
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	41.5%	4.3%	54.2%	0%
<b>Quebec</b>	31.6%	4.5%	62.5%	1.4%
<b>Ontario</b>	36.1%	4.7%	58.0%	1.1%
<b>Prairies</b>	40.6%	9.7%	58.0%	1.1%
<b>Alberta</b>	40.6%	9.7%	48.6%	1.2%
<b>British Columbia</b>	34.7%	3.7%	58.6%	3.0%
<b>Canada</b>	35.3%	5.1%	58.4%	1.3%

## 2.4 Individuals Who Feel They are Overweight Have an Average of 23.6 lbs. to Lose

On average, respondents who are overweight would like to lose 23.6 lbs. A proportion of 25.8% would like to lose 10 lbs. or less while 36.8% would like to lose between 11 to 20 lbs. and 34.2% would like to lose more than 20 lbs.

Although the percentage of men and women wanting to lose 10 lbs. or less is very similar, this is not the case for other weight-loss goals. In fact, 45.7% of men mentioned having between 11 to 20 lbs. to lose while 39.1% of women feel they have 20 lbs. or more to shed. The average desired weight loss in women is about 25.5 lbs. while for men it is 20.8 lbs. This average reaches its highest rate in Atlantic Canada with 25.6 lbs. and its lowest in British Columbia with 20.2 lbs.

<b>Q3 APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH WEIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE ?</b> <b>N = 531</b>	<b>10 lbs. or less</b>	<b>Between 10 to 20 lbs.</b>	<b>20 lbs. or more</b>	<b>Don't know/ Refusal</b>
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	23.5 %	35.8 %	40.7 %	0 %
<b>Quebec</b>	27.7 %	36.9 %	34.2 %	1.2 %
<b>Ontario</b>	23.1 %	38.7 %	36.3 %	1.8 %
<b>Prairies</b>	26.4 %	39.4 %	29.3 %	4.8 %
<b>Alberta</b>	24.6 %	34.7 %	34.1 %	6.6 %
<b>British Columbia</b>	32.4 %	31.7 %	26.7 %	9.2 %
<b>Canada</b>	25.8 %	36.8 %	34.2 %	3.1 %

## 2.5 More Than One-Quarter of the Canadian Population Has Previously Followed a Weight-Loss Program

In Canada, 27.0% of the population admits to having previously followed a weight-loss program. Among those individuals, 26.6% of them have been on one diet in their lifetime, 20.4% have been on two, 19.8% have been on three or four and 25.8% have been on at least five.

We note that 79.2% of individuals who have been on a weight-loss program are women.

Individuals who do not work outside the home (40.7%) and those aged between 45 and 54 are more likely to have been on a diet in their lifetime.

Q4--Have you ever followed a weight -loss program? N = 1504	YES	NO	DNK/Refusal
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	33.8 %	66.2 %	0 %
<b>Quebec</b>	26.2 %	73.5 %	0.3 %
<b>Ontario</b>	28.4 %	71.5 %	0.2 %
<b>Prairies</b>	24.3 %	75.7 %	0 %
<b>Alberta</b>	23.7 %	76.3 %	0 %
<b>British Columbia</b>	24.4 %	75.0 %	0.6 %
<b>Canada</b>	27.0 %	72.8 %	0.3 %

Q4- In your lifetime, how many times have you been on a weight -loss program? N = 406	Once	Twice	Three to four times	Five times or more	DNK/Refusal
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	21.0 %	28.1 %	19.3 %	26.9 %	4.6 %
<b>Quebec</b>	29.5 %	19.0 %	22.9 %	23.6 %	5.1 %
<b>Ontario</b>	29.3 %	18.1 %	20.8 %	24.5 %	5.0 %
<b>Prairies</b>	22.6 %	21.0 %	17.1 %	26.4 %	12.9 %
<b>Alberta</b>	23.4 %	24.6 %	12.3 %	30.5 %	9.2 %
<b>British Columbia</b>	20.5 %	21.2 %	17.3 %	30.4 %	10.6 %
<b>Canada</b>	26.6 %	20.4 %	19.8 %	25.8 %	7.5 %

## 2.6 Canadians Follow Weight-Loss Programs Mainly for Health-Related Reasons

It is first and foremost out of concern for their health that 81.3% of Canadians have followed a weight-loss program in the past. A portion of 14.9% mentioned having been on such a program in order to improve their image.

### **3.0 Methodology**

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This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1504 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centers between July 3 and July 11, 2001. Up to ten recalls were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. The maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1504 respondents is of  $\pm 2.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20.