

Mobility Matters: Landmark Survey on Chronic Low Back Pain in America and Mobility Index: Executive Summary

Method statement

The *Mobility Matters: Landmark Survey on Chronic Low Back Pain in America and Mobility Index* was conducted online in the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Vertos Medical among 5,020 adults ages 18+, including 1,521 adults who currently experience chronic low back pain and/or sciatic pain, i.e., back pain that runs into the hips and legs (“CLBP sufferers”). The survey was conducted May 12 – May 20, 2022. Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, household income, household size, and marital status to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the US adult population, allowing estimates of the prevalence and magnitude of survey responses to be extrapolated to this population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data are accurate to within +/- 1.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level for the total sample of US adults, and +/- 3.0 percentage points using a 95% confidence level for CLBP sufferers. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest. All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Due to weighting, computer rounding and/or the acceptance of multiple responses, percentages may not add to 100%.

Mobility Matters: Landmark Survey on Chronic Low Back Pain in America

CLBP: Experience and Diagnosis

- **Overall, more than 72.3 million US adults – more than a quarter of all adults (28%) – are currently experiencing chronic low back/sciatic pain**
 - Low back pain accounts for the majority of this (25%, 9% sciatic)
 - Adults in their 50s are the most likely to be experiencing chronic low back/leg pain (35%)
- Around half say their CLB pain is moderate (48%), with more than one-third (36%) saying it is severe, very severe, or the worst pain possible; less than 2 in 10 say their pain is mild (15%)
 - Adults in their 50’s are most likely to say their pain is severe, very severe, or the worst pain possible (46%)
- 78% have been experiencing CLBP for 1 year or more, with more than 2 in 5 (44%) having been experiencing it for 5+ years
- While most have seen an HCP about their CLBP, nearly 1 in 5 (18%) have not, especially those under 50 (25%)
 - Half (49%) have seen a PCP and many (69%) have seen some other non-PCP healthcare provider, most commonly a physical therapist (30%) or chiropractor (30%). A similar proportion (31%) have seen a spine health specialist such as a pain specialist (22%), PM&R doctor (12%), interventional pain physician (6%), or physiatrist (3%).
 - On average, CLBP sufferers have seen 3 HCPs, and have made an average of 4 visits to an HCP about their CLBP in the past 12 months alone
- **78% of American adults with CLBP do not know an enlarged ligament could cause CLBP**; only around 1 in 5 (22%) have ever been told by an HCP that CLBP can be caused by an enlarged ligament and only 2 in 5 (39%) have ever been told that CLBP can be caused by lumbar spinal stenosis – compare this to 54% who have been told by HCP that CLBP can be caused by osteoarthritis/aging.
- 70% of CLBP sufferers say they often experience pain or numbness in their low back when standing or walking and 62% often experience pain, numbness, tingling, or heaviness in their legs or buttocks when standing or walking – with 50% saying they experience both

- A majority of CLBP sufferers say they sometimes alleviate their pain by sitting (81%), bending over/leaning forward (71%), or sleeping in the fetal position (63%) – with nearly all (94%) sometimes alleviating their pain in any one of these ways consistent with neurogenic claudication, and more than 2 in 5 (43%) doing all three
- Less than half (46%) have ever had an MRI to determine the cause of their CLBP; X-ray (56%) is the most common diagnostic tool CLBP sufferers say they have had
 - 69% have had an MRI, X-ray, or CT
 - 1 in 5 (22%) have never had any diagnostic imaging
- **27 million (37%) have never been told by an HCP exactly what causes their CLBP**
 - This is despite 86% agreeing it's important to know the specific cause of their CLBP so it can be managed effectively
- HCPs are not necessarily communicating the link between LSS and the enlarged ligament
 - Only 11% of CLBP sufferers have been told by an HCP they have LSS caused by an enlarged ligament

CLBP Treatment

- Most (84%) have taken medication or had treatments/procedures to address their CLBP, mostly medications (77%)
 - Most common treatment by far is OTC NSAIDs (57%), followed distantly by prescription non-opioids or non-NSAIDs (38%), prescriptions NSAIDs (30%), and prescription opioids (30%)
 - 26% have done conservative or eastern medicine such as chiropractic adjustment, PT, or acupuncture
 - 21% have taken ESIs, and 77% of them have had more than one
 - 1 in 10 or less have had a specific procedure:
 - Back surgery (10%), in-office procedure (8%), minimally invasive lumbar decompression procedure (5%), implants (4%)
- **Opioid use is a significant, alarming concern: 30% of CLBP patients have been prescribed opioids for pain; 15% are currently taking opioids, with the highest use among people in their 50s (19%)**
- The vast majority of CLBP sufferers are currently treating their CLBP (73%) – by far most commonly with OTC NSAIDs (45%)
 - Less than one-quarter report currently using prescription non-opioids or non-NSAIDs (19%), prescription NSAIDs (12%), conservative or eastern medicine (13%), or ESIs (6%)
- *Perceptions* of treatment effectiveness among all CLBP sufferers are not very positive – the highest are prescription non-opioids or non-NSAIDs (56% say they are very/somewhat effective), OTC NSAIDs (53%), and prescription opioids (50%), but even those only get ~half saying they are very/somewhat effective
 - However, among those who have ever used each treatment, these %s are higher – the highest being for prescription opioids (79%) and conservative eastern medicine (78%)
 - Most of those who don't have experience with procedures like back surgery (55%) and minimally invasive lumbar decompression (59%) are saying “not sure”, which suggests they likely do not have enough information to form an opinion and require more education on these treatment options
 - Of those who have had these procedures (small sample sizes), strong majorities find them to be effective
- Among those who have never used a specific treatment type, interest is greatest for conservative eastern medicine (57%) and prescription non-opioids or non-NSAIDs (53%); interest is lowest for back surgery (27%), prescription opioids (30%), and implants (30%)
 - 39% who have never had minimally invasive lumbar decompression are interested
- **84% wish there were better treatment options to address their CLBP and 70% say it has been difficult to find a treatment that works well to ease their CLBP**

- While 62% say they would do anything to help ease their CLBP, 79% have concerns about having surgery to address it and 64% would not consider major surgery at all

CLBP Impact

- **Most say their CLBP has interfered with their ability to complete everyday tasks (76%),** primarily by making it more difficult (63%); only a minority say it has prevented them from doing them altogether (13%)
- Unsurprisingly, **CLBP has had a negative impact on nearly every aspect of people's lives, most commonly their ability to exercise (63%), stand (63%) or walk (58%) for long periods of time, and their ability to get a good night's sleep (55%)**
- **53% say their CLBP has had a major/moderate negative impact on their overall quality of life, but 78% have accepted their CLBP as part of their life**

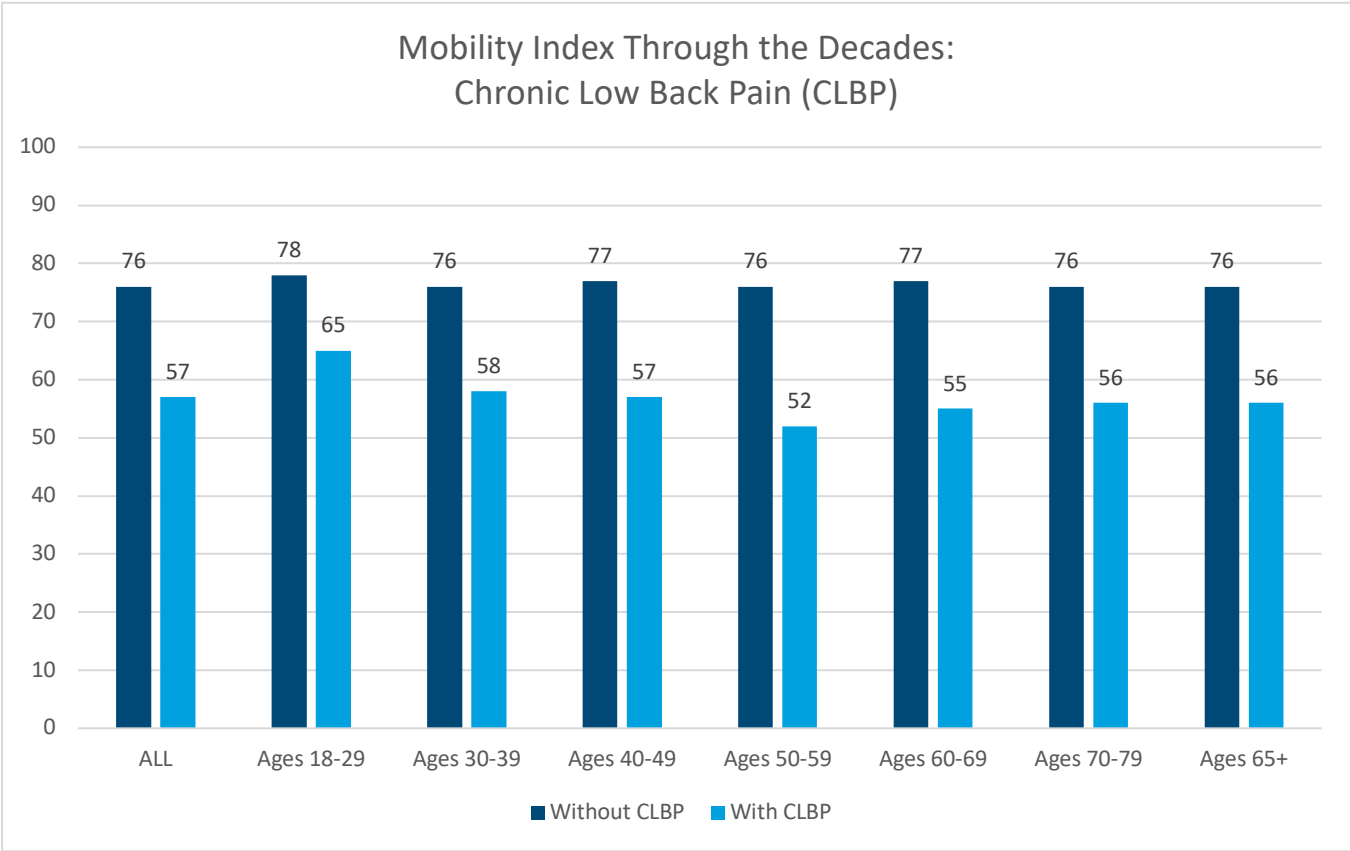
CLBP Sufferers 65+ Years

- Adults 65+ years are an important population group to assess because most are enrolled in Medicare,¹ which can influence how patients seek access to treatments
- One in 4 adults ages 65+ (25%) are currently experiencing chronic low back pain, and of those, just 1 in 10 (10%) have ever been told by a healthcare provider that an enlarged ligament may be the cause of their chronic pain
- CLBP sufferers 65+ report feeling frustrated (57%), limited (54%), uncomfortable (53%), disappointed (43%), or fatigued (37%) when describing their body's current ability to move
- 89% have been experiencing CLBP for 1 year or more, with more than half (57%) having been experiencing it for 5+ years
- 79% of CLBP sufferers 65+ exhibit symptoms of LSS, with 95% reporting relief methods consistent with signs of neurogenic claudication
Relief methods include:
 - Alleviate their pain by sitting (83%)
 - Bending over/leaning forward (67%)
 - Or sleeping in the fetal position (54%)
- On average, CLBP sufferers 65+ have seen 3 HCPs, and 42% have made 3 or more visits to an HCP about their CLBP in the past 12 months alone
- 92% of CLBP sufferers 65+ have tried some form of medication or had treatments/procedures to address their CLBP, but 82% describe their current pain level as moderate to worst pain possible (4-10/10)
- **Opioid use is a significant, alarming concern: 25% of CLBP patients 65+ have been prescribed opioids for pain; 12% are currently taking opioids**
- 33% have ever had an epidural steroid injection (ESI), and of those, 73% have had more than 1 ESI
- **90% wish there were better treatment options to address their CLBP and 70% say it has been difficult to find a treatment that works well to ease their CLBP**
- While 44% say they would do anything to help ease their CLBP, 87% have concerns about having surgery to address it and 70% would not consider major surgery at all
- **Most say their CLBP has interfered with their ability to complete everyday tasks (75%),** primarily by making it more difficult (64%)
- Unsurprisingly, **CLBP has had a negative impact on nearly every aspect of people's lives, most commonly their ability to exercise (65%), or stand (69%) or walk (68%) for long periods of time**
- **55% say their CLBP has had a major/moderate negative impact on their overall quality of life, but 84% have accepted their CLBP as part of their life**

Mobility Matters: Landmark Survey Mobility Index

- As we age, it can be difficult to assess what mobility challenges are a normal part of aging or a condition that may be treatable, such as CLBP. The Mobility Index was designed to demonstrate how people could be moving through the decades of their lives if chronic low back or leg pain was not a limiting factor
- Survey respondents were asked to rate their ability to conduct various physical activities – including (but not limited to) walking certain distances, sitting and standing for specific amounts of time, going up and down stairs, dancing through a song, preparing a meal, and sleeping through the night comfortably – and to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements about mobility, pain, physical limitations, and ability to complete everyday tasks
 - Activities were weighted (or scored) by ease or difficulty, and attitudinal statements that were found to correlate most closely with the physical activities were incorporated into the model, to develop a Mobility Index for all US adults, including the ability to analyze by age, CLBP, and dozens of other variables
- Around half of all US adults ages 18+ rate their mobility as very good or excellent (52%), including over half of adults 65+ (53%)
 - Self-reported mobility on its own is not linear with age (and this is also reflected in the Mobility Index, below) – adults in their 30's (52%), 40's (53%), 60's (52%) and 70's (52%) all rate their mobility similarly. Those in their 50's are less likely than those age cohorts to rate their mobility as very good or excellent (45%), more in line with 80+ year olds (42%).
- Around one-quarter of all adults say uncomfortable (27%), fatigued (27%), frustrated (26%), limited (24%), or disappointed (22%) describes their body's current ability to move
- The average mobility score for an American adult is 71.0, but for those without CLBP, this jumps to 76.4.
- The average CLBP sufferer has a mobility score of just 57.0
 - CLBP sufferers in their 50's have the lowest mobility score at 51.5
- The following graphs depict some key Mobility Index findings:

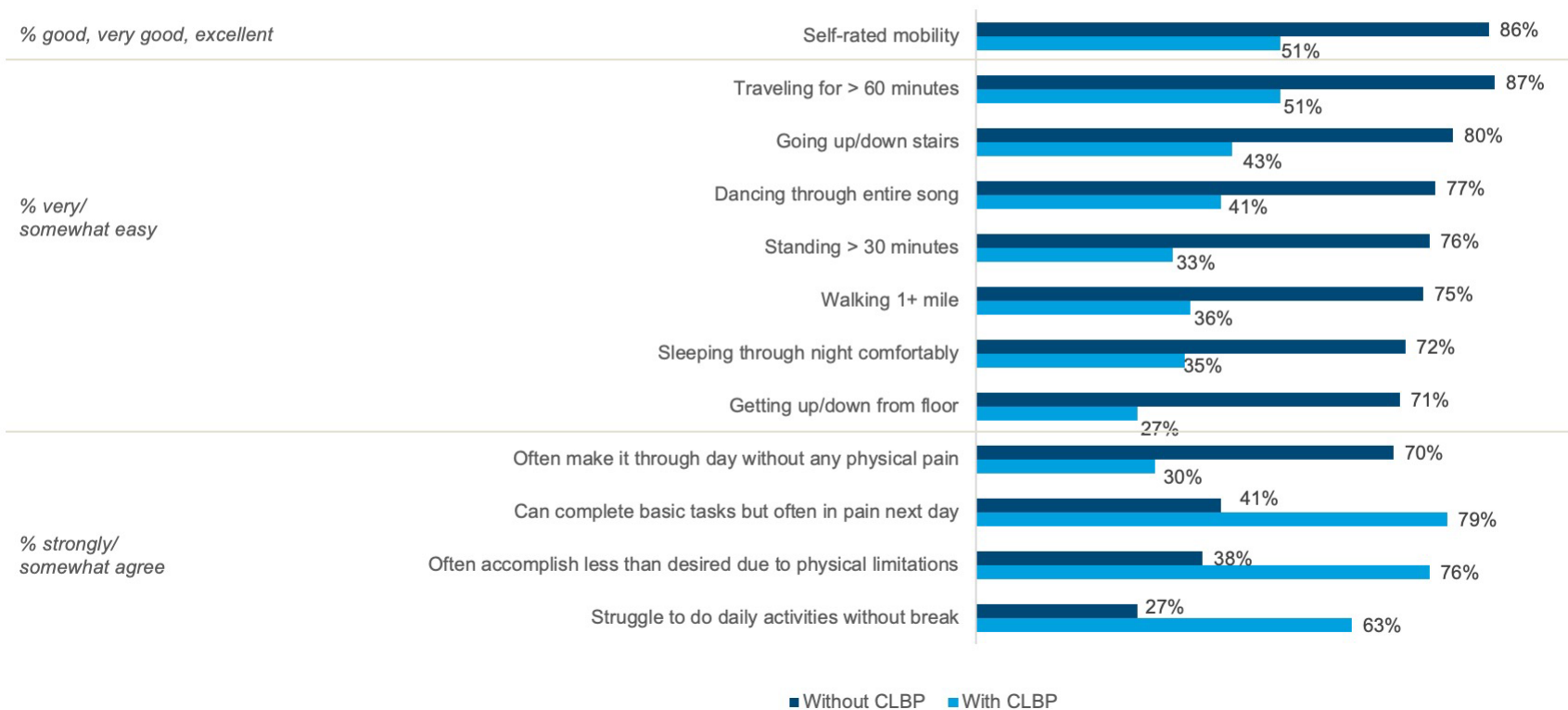
Most decades show a roughly **20 POINT DROP** in mobility among those with CLBP, with the highest drop observed among those in their 50's (24-points)





Mobility Index Through The Decades: In the 50's

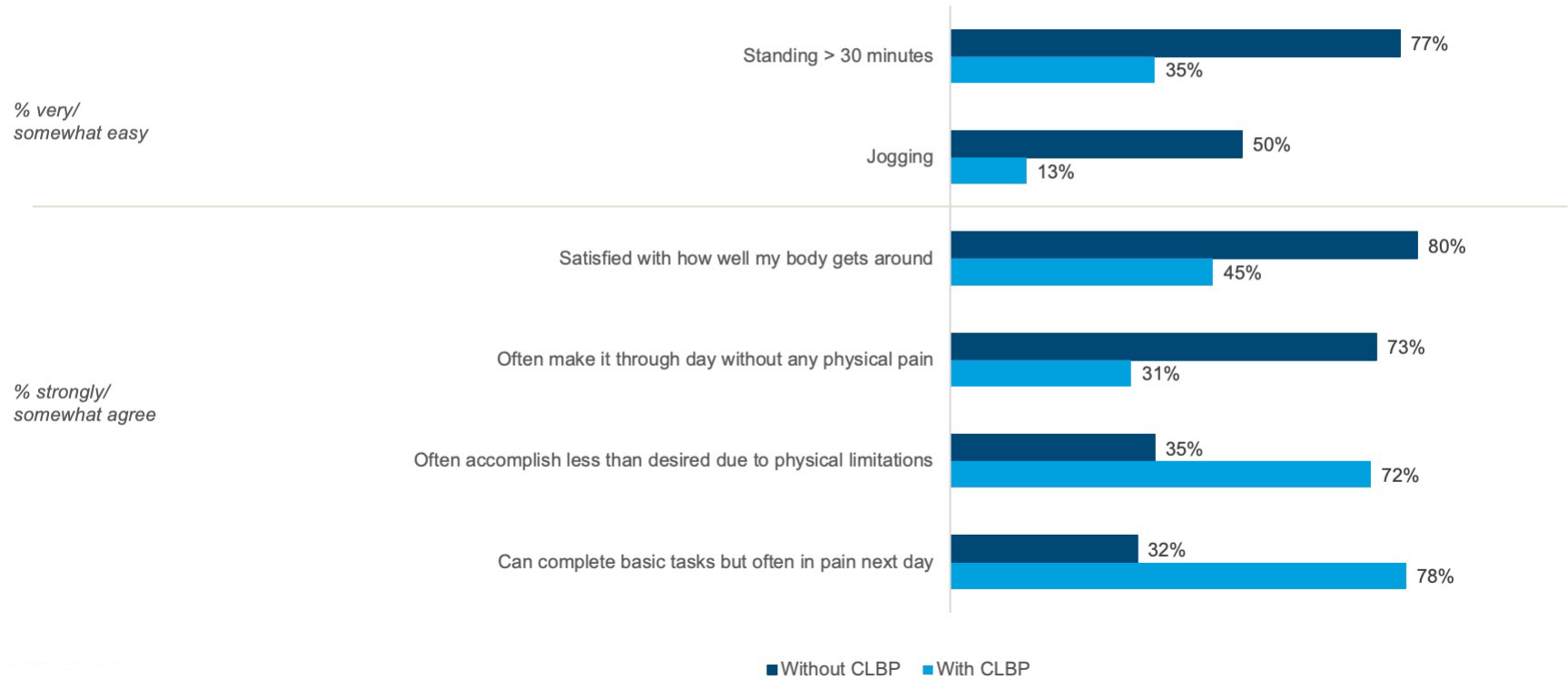
Mobility Index Components with ≥ 35 pt. differential
Among adults in their 50's





Mobility Index Through The Decades: In the 60's

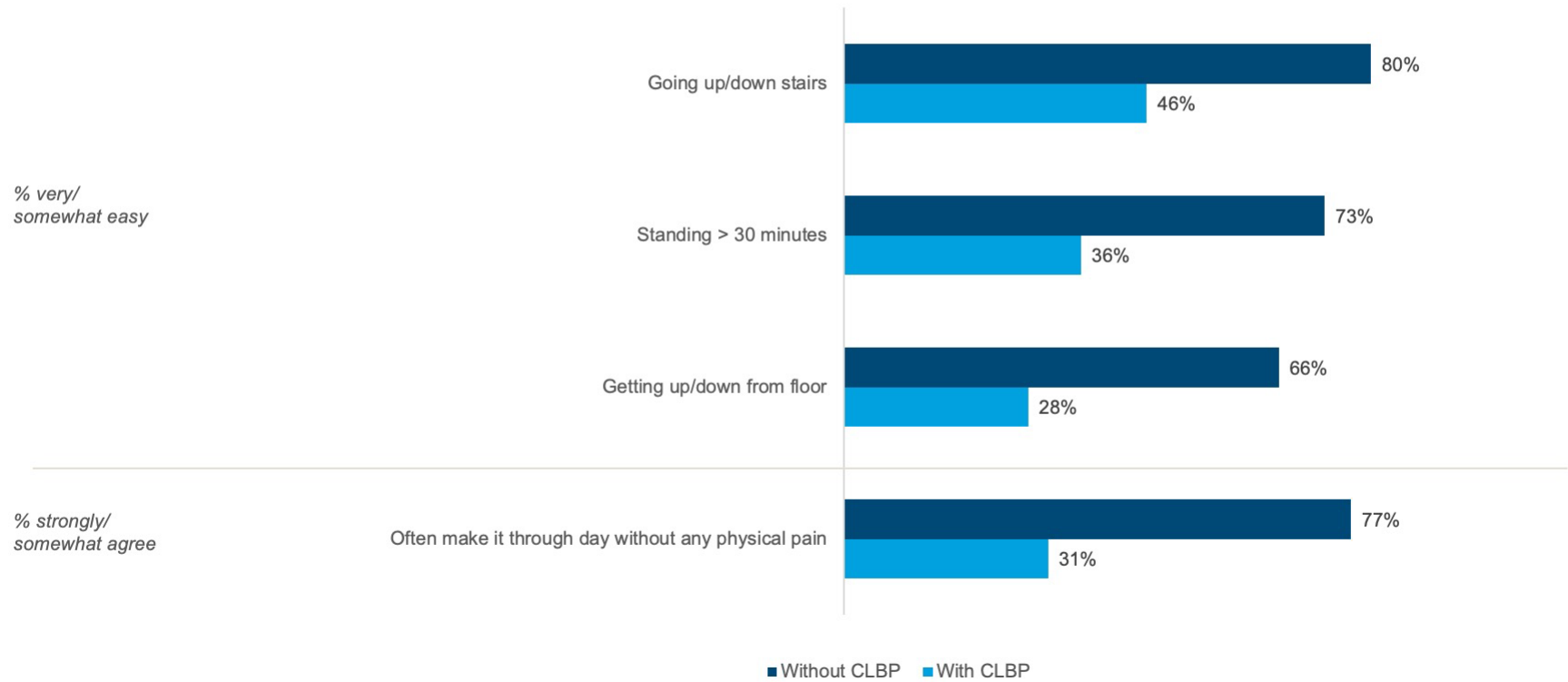
Mobility Index Components with ≥ 35 pt. differential
 Among adults in their 60's





Mobility Index Through The Decades: In the 70's

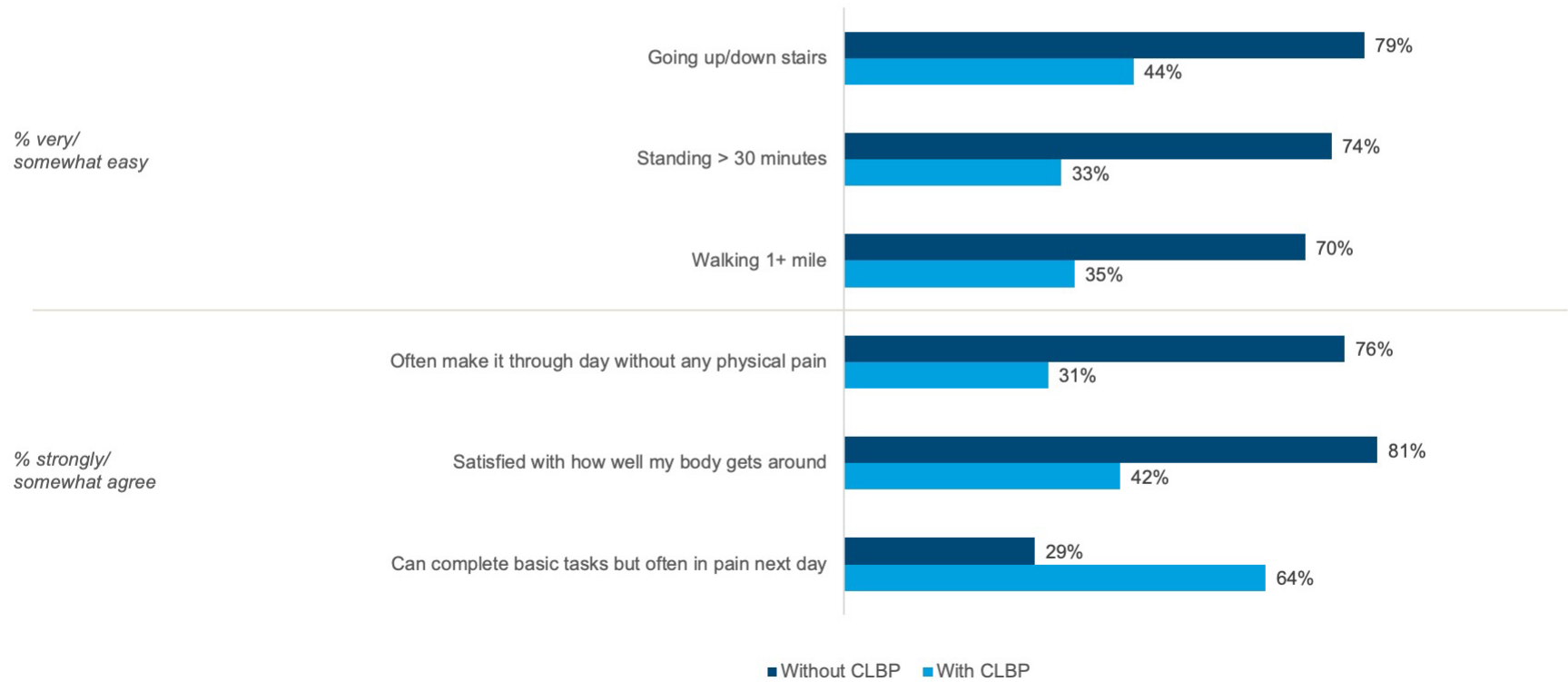
Mobility Index Components with ≥ 35 pt. differential
 Among adults in their 70's





Mobility Index Through The Decades: 65+

Mobility Index Components with ≥ 35 pt. differential
Among adults 65+



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Mobility Matters: Landmark Survey on Low Back Pain in America and Mobility Index Topline Fact Sheet

Overall, **28% of US adults age 18y+ – more than 72.3 million people** and more than arthritis (58.5 million),² diabetes (37.3 million),³ or heart disease (30.3 million)⁴ – self-report that they are currently experiencing chronic low back pain (CLBP). As shown in the Table below, the responses vary by age groups and CLBP status, and represent significantly greater prevalence of CLBP than previously thought.

Responses to Survey Questions	All Adults	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-59	Ages 60-69	Ages 70-79	Ages 65+
CLBP and Sciatic Pain								
• Percent who reported having CLB/sciatic pain	28%	24%	31%	27%	35%	25%	26%	25%
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who describe their pain level as moderate to worst pain possible	85%	80%	87%	85%	87%	85%	82%	82%
• Percent who reported their pain was severe, very severe, or the worst pain possible	36%	29%	41%	40%	46%	31%	28%	26%
Percent of respondents who reported ever being treated for CLBP with:								
• Drugs* (see opioids and NSAIDs below)	77%	56%	75%	84%	85%	84%	82%	83%
• Conservative/Eastern medicine therapies, e.g., physical therapy, chiropractic adjustments, acupuncture	26%	21%	23%	25%	29%	31%	30%	29%
• Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)	21%	9%	15%	21%	23%	31%	34%	33%
• Minimally Invasive Out-Patient Lumbar Decompression Procedures, e.g., mild, Vertiflex spacer	5%	7%	7%	8%	2%	4%	3%	3%
• In-Office Procedures, e.g., nerve ablation, kyphoplasty	8%	5%	8%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%
• Back Surgery, e.g., spinal fusion, disc replacement	10%	7%	7%	6%	12%	12%	18%	15%
• None	16%	35%	18%	12%	11%	10%	7%	8%

Responses to Survey Questions	All Adults	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-59	Ages 60-69	Ages 70-79	Ages 65+
Opioids								
• Percent who have been prescribed opioids for CLBP	30%	14%	33%	35%	40%	30%	27%	25%
• Percent currently using opioids for CLBP	15%	9%	17%	16%	19%	14%	12%	12%
NSAIDs (OTC)								
• Percent who have taken OTC NSAIDs for their CLBP	57%	41%	50%	65%	61%	65%	69%	69%
• Percent who are currently using OTC NSAIDs for their CLBP	45%	32%	37%	50%	49%	51%	56%	57%
NSAIDs (Prescription)								
• Percent who have used Rx NSAIDs for CLBP	30%	14%	28%	38%	36%	37%	30%	31%
• Percent who are currently using Rx NSAIDs for CLBP	12%	6%	13%	16%	18%	11%	10%	11%
Non-opioids/Non-NSAIDs (Prescription)								
• Percent who have used Rx non-opioids/non-NSAIDs for CLBP	38%	22%	35%	46%	46%	45%	40%	41%
• Percent who are currently using Rx non-opioids/non-NSAIDs for CLBP	19%	12%	18%	25%	25%	15%	16%	17%
CLBP Length of Time								
• Percent who have had it \geq 1 year	78%	60%	70%	75%	87%	88%	89%	89%
• Percent who have had it \geq 5 years	44%	14%	33%	42%	62%	59%	61%	57%
LSS Symptoms and Relief								
• Percent of those with CLBP who experienced at least one LSS symptom, e.g., pain, numbness, tingling or heaviness in low back and/or legs or buttocks when standing or walking	82%	74%	87%	83%	84%	80%	80%	79%

Responses to Survey Questions	All Adults	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-59	Ages 60-69	Ages 70-79	Ages 65+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent who reported using relief methods consistent with leg pain/neurogenic claudication: 	94%	91%	96%	95%	96%	92%	95%	95%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting 	81%	77%	80%	83%	83%	78%	85%	83%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bending over, leaning forward 	71%	68%	76%	77%	69%	68%	62%	67%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping in fetal position 	63%	67%	71%	65%	65%	57%	49%	54%
HCP Visits for CLBP								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average number of HCPs seen for CLBP 	3.3	2.5	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average number of HCP visits for CLBP in past 12 months 	4.0	3.9	3.5	4.1	5.0	4.0	3.7	3.7
Imaging and Diagnosis								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of CLBP sufferers who've had diagnostic imaging for CLB/leg pain 	72%	60%	66%	68%	76%	84%	79%	80%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of CLBP sufferers never told by an HCP exactly what caused their CLBP 	37%	35%	35%	43%	46%	31%	30%	31%

Responses to Survey Questions	All Adults	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-59	Ages 60-69	Ages 70-79	Ages 65+
Lack of Treatment Satisfaction								
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who tried medication or treatments/procedures	84%	65%	82%	88%	89%	90%	93%	92%
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who had an ESI	21%	9%	15%	21%	23%	31%	34%	33%
• Percent who had an ESI and then had additional injection(s) (caution: small base (n<100) for age breaks)	77%	77%	66%	80%	87%	73%	77%	73%
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who wish there were better treatment options	84%	68%	83%	86%	90%	89%	91%	90%
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who said it has been difficult to find a treatment that works well to ease their CLBP pain	70%	58%	73%	73%	77%	66%	68%	70%
• Percent of CLBP sufferers who said they would do anything to help ease their CLBP, but	62%	56%	69%	75%	68%	51%	45%	44%
○ Percent who have concerns about surgery, and	79%	62%	79%	78%	83%	87%	89%	87%
○ Percent who would not consider major surgery at all.	64%	58%	68%	61%	62%	67%	73%	70%

Responses to Survey Questions	All Adults	Ages 18-29	Ages 30-39	Ages 40-49	Ages 50-59	Ages 60-69	Ages 70-79	Ages 65+
CLBP Impact on QoL								
• Percent who say their CLBP has interfered with their ability to complete everyday tasks, primarily by making them more difficult (percent)	76%	67%	80%	73%	82%	76%	78%	75%
• CLBP has a negative impact on nearly every aspect of people’s lives, most commonly their ability to exercise (percent), stand (percent) or walk (percent) for long periods of time, and their ability to get a good night’s sleep (percent).	63%	57%	70%	61%	64%	63%	66%	64%
• Percent who say their CLBP has had a major/moderate negative impact on their overall QoL, but (percent) have accepted their CLBP as part of their life.	63%/ 63% 58%/ 55%	56% / 52% 45% / 58%	58% / 59% 53% / 56%	64%/ 59%/ 58% / 58%	73% / 71% 63% / 62%	63% / 67% 64% / 56%	65% / 69% 67% / 34%	65%/69% 68%/40%
	53%	42%	46%	52%	63%	61%	55%	55%
	78%	67%	71%	79%	84%	83%	87%	84
MOBILITY INDEX								
• Average among those without CLBP	76	78	76	77	76	77	76	76
• Average among those with CLBP	57	65	58	57	52	55	56	56

References

¹ Cohen RA, Cha AE, Terlizzi EP, Martinez ME. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Demographic Variation in Health Insurance Coverage: United States, 2019. National Health Statistics Report No. 159; June 29, 2021. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr159-508.pdf>. Accessed June 18, 2022.

² Barbour KE, Helmick CG, Boring M, Brady TJ. Vital Signs: Prevalence of Doctor-Diagnosed Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Activity Limitation—United States, 2013–2015. Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017;66:246–253. doi: 10.15585/mmwr.mm6609e1.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Diabetes Statistics Report. Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/statistics-report/index.html>. Accessed June 18, 2022.

⁴ HealthLine. Heart Disease: Facts, Statistics, and You. Available: <https://www.healthline.com/health/heart-disease/statistics#Who-is-at-risk?>. Accessed June 18, 2022.