



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

AMERICANS' READINESS TO EMERGE FROM THE PANDEMIC AND HOW THEIR DAILY LIVES HAVE CHANGED

The lives of most adults in America remain different than they were before the pandemic. While not everyone expects to regularly use services accelerated by COVID-19 like curbside pickup, grocery delivery, telehealth, or reduced-capacity “senior hours” once the pandemic ends, many have gained familiarity with them and think it is a good thing that these changes may remain available as options in daily life.

A new study from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and The SCAN Foundation finds that just 12% of adults feel that their lives are completely the same today as they were before the pandemic, 54% feel their lives are somewhat the same, and 34% are not yet the same. Fifty-six percent of those whose lives are completely the same think that is a good thing, while 39% of those whose lives are not yet the same feel that is a bad thing.

More than half remain at least somewhat concerned about COVID-19 infection, and even if the perceived importance of wearing a mask has waned for some adults, many think steps like vaccination and effective treatments remain critical to participating fully in public life. To get back to pre-pandemic life, 51% feel it is essential to be vaccinated and 50% consider the availability of effective treatments to be essential. Just 22% feel regular indoor masking is vital.



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Three Things You Should Know

About The Long-Term Care Poll on Pandemic Life Among Adults Age 18 and Older:

- 1) Many think virtual community events (54%), remote work (54%), and telehealth (48%) are good things that should continue after the pandemic ends.
- 2) To fully return to public life, 51% feel that it's essential to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and 50% consider the availability of effective COVID-19 treatments essential. Just 22% think regular indoor masking is vital.
- 3) Black and Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to consider regular indoor mask wearing (78% and 62% vs. 44%) and regular testing for COVID-19 (71% and 58% vs. 42%) important to a full return to public life.

Despite few reporting that their lives are completely the same, majorities have resumed activities they regularly did before the pandemic. Among those who did each at least monthly pre-pandemic, more than three-quarters expect to socialize with friends or neighbors in person (87%), go out to a bar or restaurant (79%), visit with older relatives in person (79%), travel (79%), and attend in-person religious services (79%) in the next few weeks. About two-thirds also expect to exercise at a gym or studio (65%) and participate in in-person community organizations (64%). Just half, however, expect to use public transportation (50%).

Groups of people that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic express more reservations about returning to public life. In particular, Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to express concerns about the virus, and they are less likely to be resuming activities like socializing with friends or neighbors in person (77% vs. 92%) or go out to eat at a bar or restaurant (63% vs. 86%). Black and Hispanic adults are both more likely than white adults to think it is essential or important for most people to regularly wear face masks in public indoor spaces (78% and 62%, respectively, vs. 44%) or that most people are regularly tested for COVID-19 (71% and 58%, respectively, vs. 42%) for them to fully return to public life.

Use of services like curbside pickup, working from home, reduced capacity 'senior hours,' and telehealth increased for many during the pandemic. And more think it would be a good thing rather than a bad thing if many of these pandemic-related shifts like telehealth options (48% vs. 18%), more remote work (54% vs. 14%), and virtual options for community events (54% vs. 13%) continued after the pandemic ends.

Still, many expect to leave behind some of the ways of pandemic life: more than half think it is unlikely they personally will do things like have groceries delivered (66%), attend virtual activities (62%), shop during senior hours (62% of those age 60 and older), and receive care through telehealth (52%) once the pandemic is over.

While COVID-19 continues to pose a greater threat to the health of older adults, those age 18-49 and those age 50 and older show similarly low levels of concern about being infected with the virus. Those age 50 and older are just as likely as younger adults to report that their lives are the same as before the pandemic, and that they have resumed many of their routine activities like visiting with friends and family, traveling, and going out to bars or restaurants.

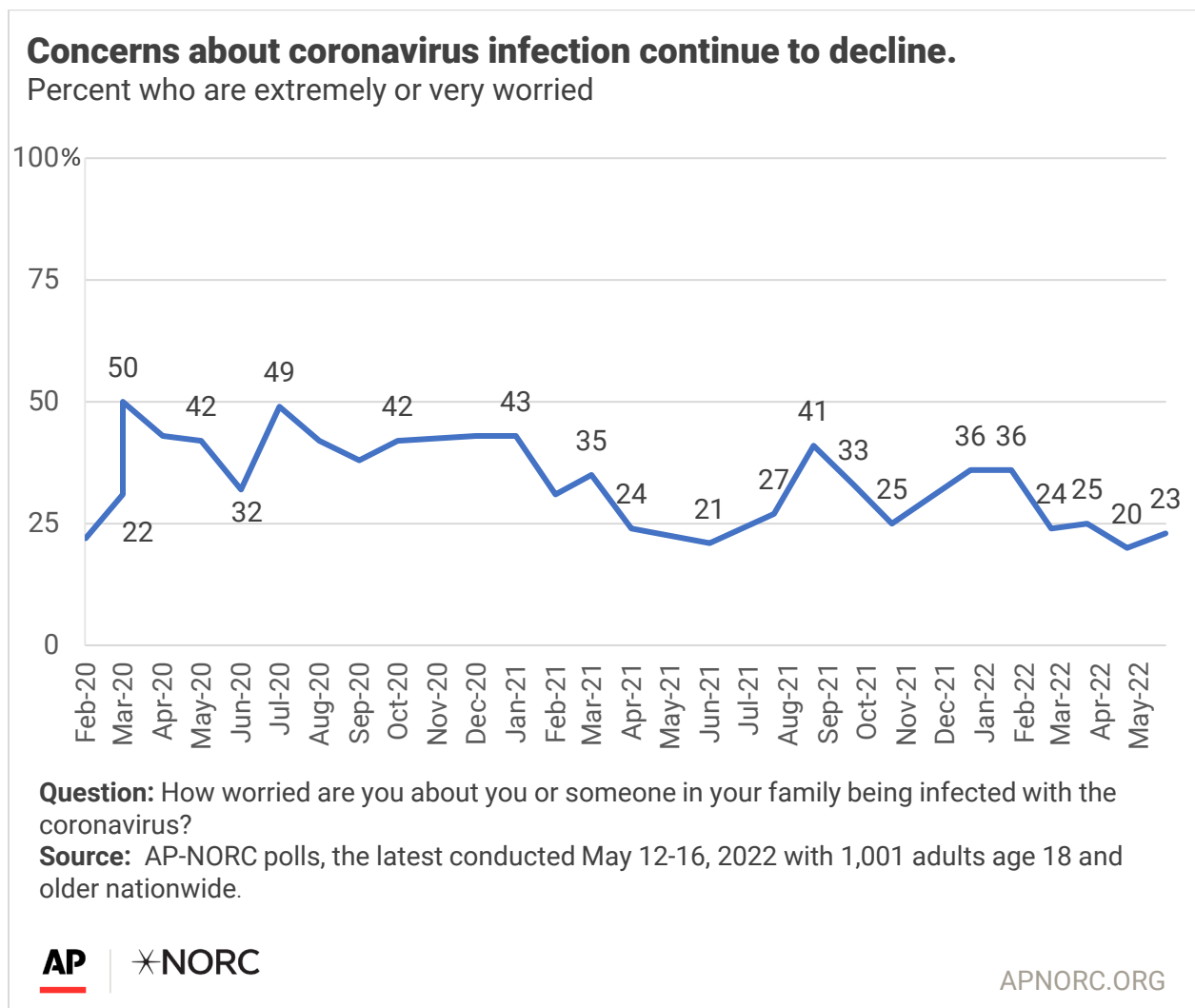
Although many changes brought by the pandemic like increased access to telehealth, grocery delivery, and expanded use of delivery and curbside pickup options by businesses should make it easier for older adults to age in their community, those age 50 and older are less likely to report that they will continue using these services after the pandemic ends. But older and younger adults were just as likely to have used these things during the pandemic, and older adults are just as likely as younger adults to think things like more people working remotely, more care provided through telehealth, and virtual options for social activities are good things rather than bad.

A third of the public feels like life has yet to return to its pre-pandemic state. These people are more concerned about the virus and are more likely to cite the need for effective treatments and vaccination against COVID-19 as essential to fully returning to public life. They also remain less likely to have resumed some of their regular activities like socializing with friends or older relatives. They are more likely to have increased their use of several services that became more common among all adults during the pandemic and are more likely to say they will use them after the pandemic ends. But they are not any more likely to say these are positive changes than other adults.

The AP-NORC Center conducted this study with funding from The SCAN Foundation (TSF). The survey includes 1,001 interviews with a nationally representative sample of adults living in America using the AmeriSpeak® Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Interviews were conducted between May 12-16, 2022, via web and phone in English. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

FEW THINK THEIR LIVES ARE BACK TO NORMAL, THOUGH MANY HAVE RETURNED TO SOCIALIZING IN PERSON, GOING OUT TO EAT, AND TRAVELING.

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise around the country, 23% of adults remain very or extremely worried about infection, while 31% are somewhat worried. Forty-five percent are not too or not at all worried. Concerns about infection have remained fairly consistent after declining in February of this year.¹



¹ Interviews were not conducted in Spanish for this survey but were for each of the prior surveys.

Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to be very or extremely worried about COVID-19 infection (27% vs. 16%). Concerns among Black adults do not differ from either Hispanic or white adults.

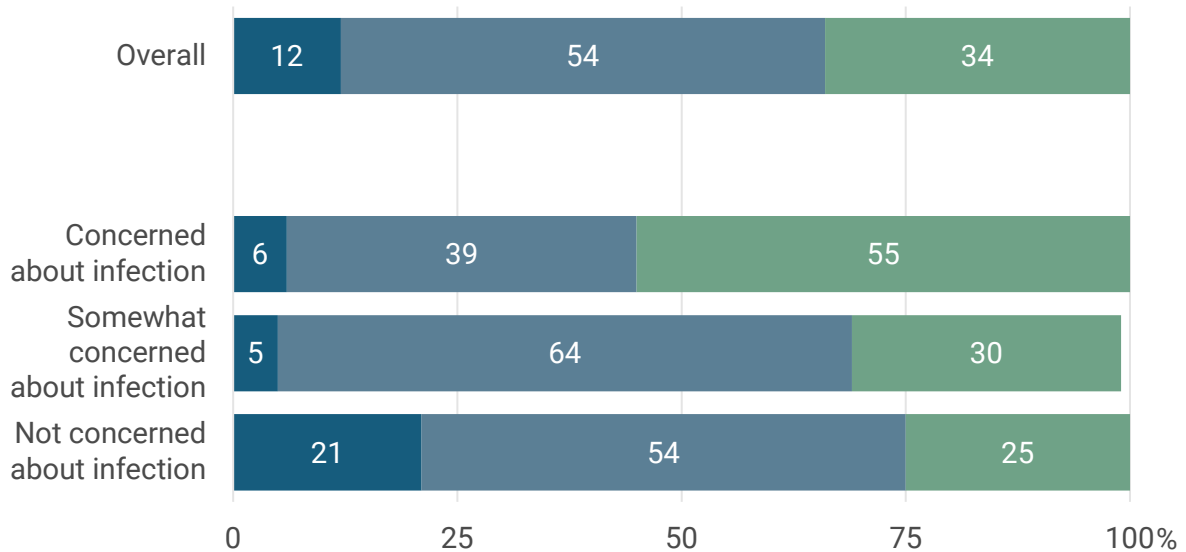
Very few adults, however, report that their lives are the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic. Just 12% feel like life is the completely the same, while 54% feel it is somewhat the same, and 34% say it is not yet the same as before.

More than half of adults who are very or extremely worried about COVID-19 infections report their lives are not yet the same and those who are less concerned about infection tend to feel life is somewhat the same. Even among those people who have few worries about COVID-19, only 21% report life is the completely the same.

Few report that their lives are the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic, even among those not worried about COVID-19 infection.

Percent of adults

■ Completely the same ■ Somewhat but not completely the same ■ Not yet the same



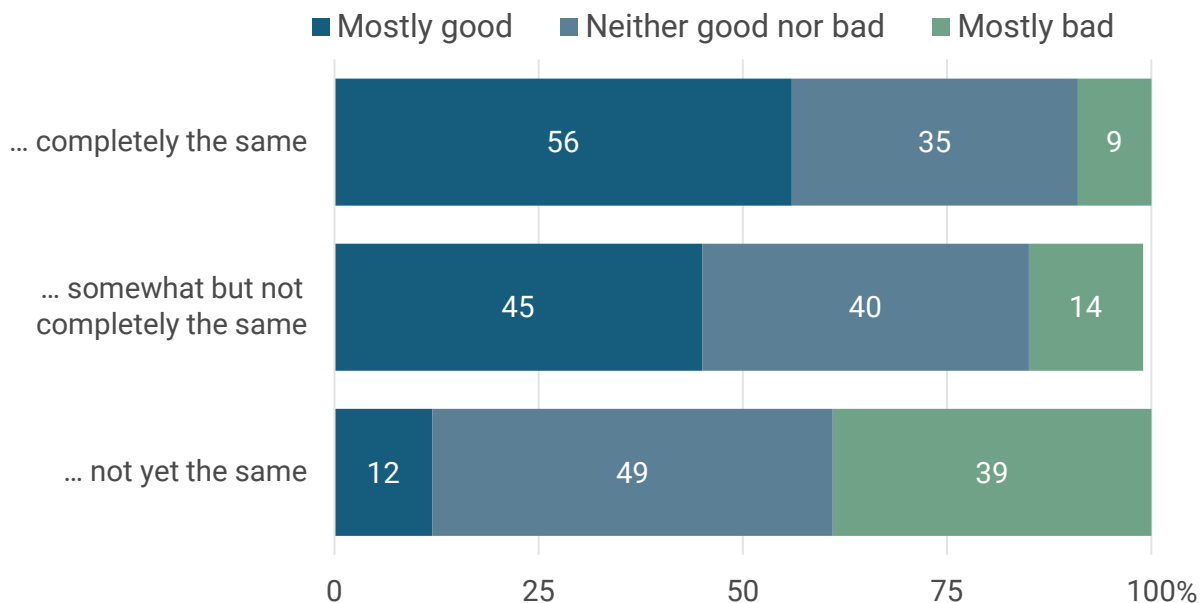
Questions: Compared to your life before the COVID-19 pandemic, would you say your life these days is...?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Among those whose lives are completely the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic, most consider that to be mostly a good thing, while those whose lives are not yet the same are more pessimistic.

Most people who feel life is back to normal are happy about it.

Percent of adults who say their life is...



Question: Would you say it is mostly good, mostly bad, or neither good nor bad that your life these days is [completely the same/somewhat but not completely the same/not yet the same]?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



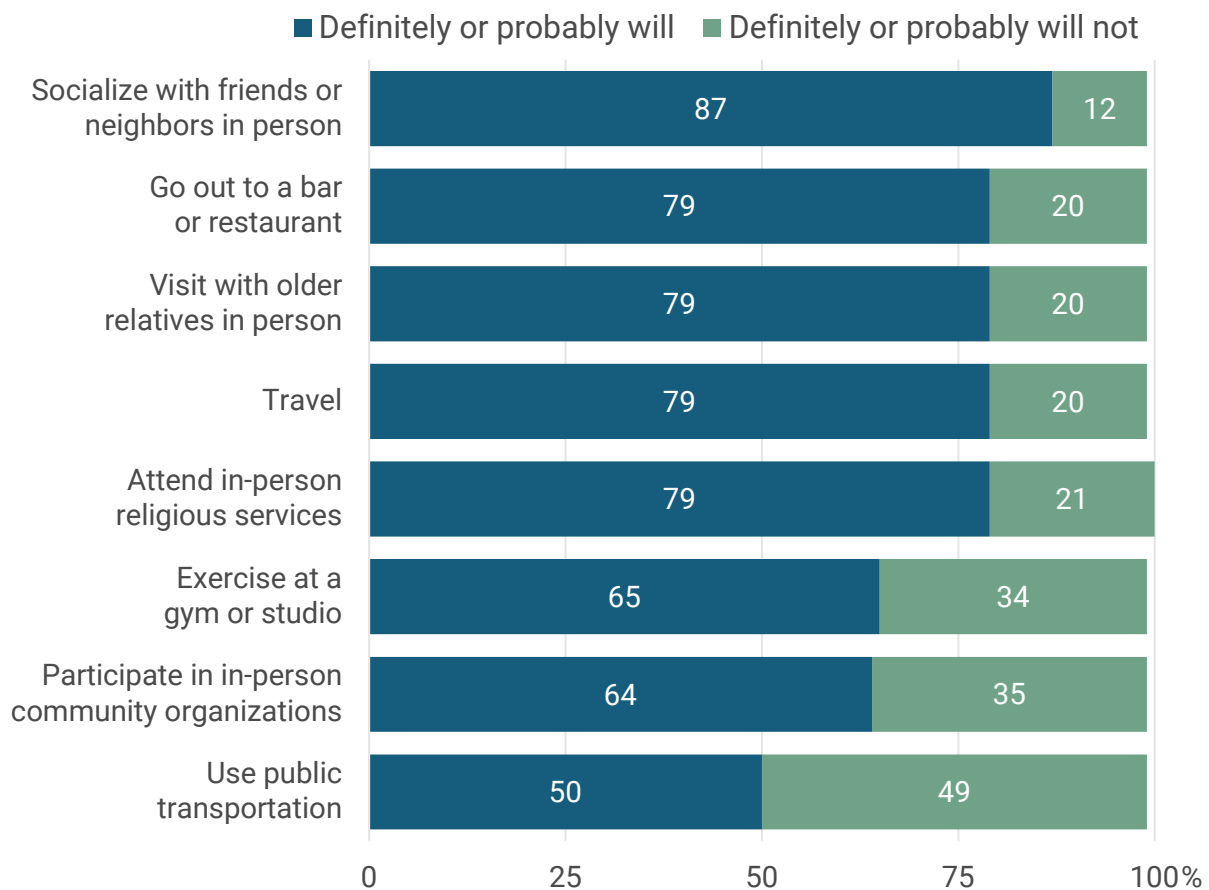
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Although few adults' lives are the same as they were prior to the pandemic, many more people are returning to the activities they did before COVID-19. Among those who socialized with friends in person at least monthly before the pandemic, 87% are likely to do so again in the next few weeks. Similarly, among those who engaged in the activity pre-pandemic, nearly 8 in 10 are likely to go out to a bar or restaurant, visit with older relatives, travel, or go to religious services in person in the next few weeks, about two-thirds expect to participate in community events or exercise at the gym, and about half are likely to use public transportation.

Hispanic adults are more likely than white adults to show hesitancy returning to some of their pre-pandemic activities. Among those who engaged in each action at least monthly before the pandemic, Hispanic adults were less likely to plan to socialize with friends or neighbors in person (77% vs. 92%) or go out to eat at a bar or restaurant (63% vs. 86%). Likelihood among Black adults does not differ from Hispanic or white adults on these activities.

Many adults are returning to the activities they did regularly before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Percent of adults who did each activity at least monthly before the pandemic



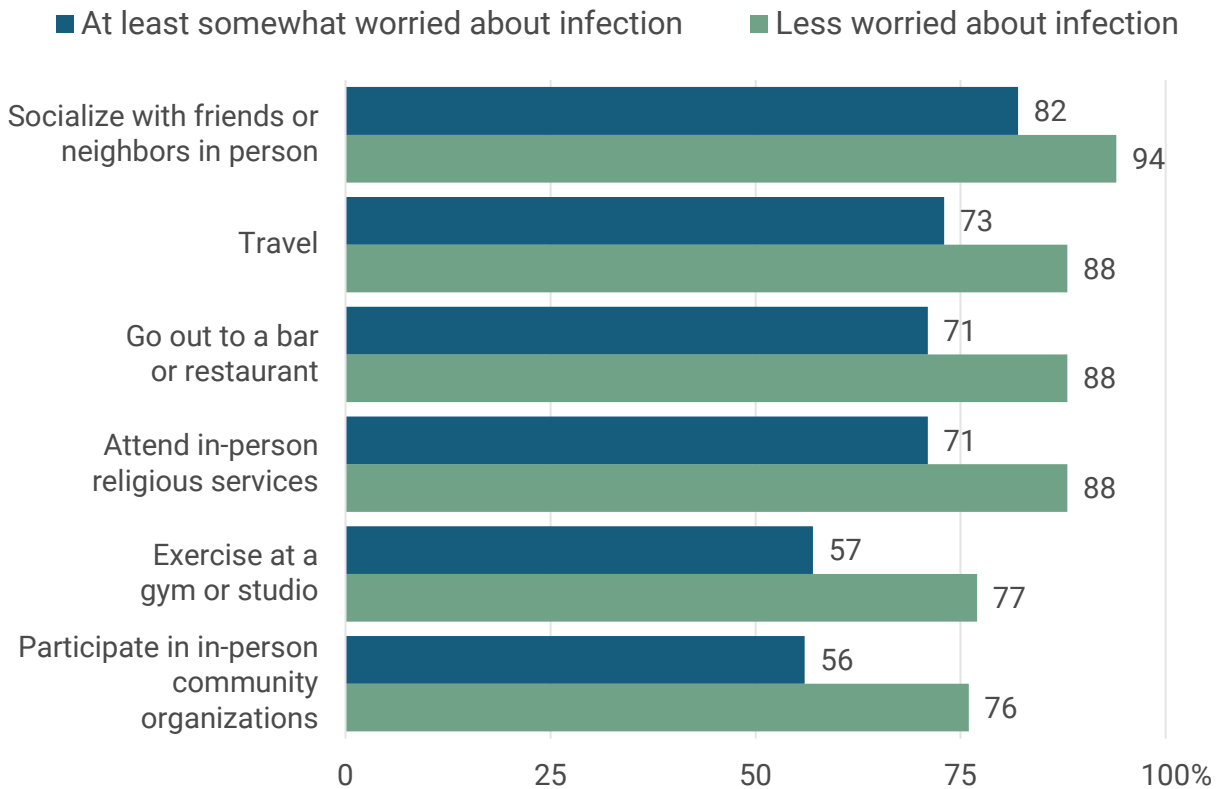
Questions: In the next few weeks, will you personally:

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Even among those people who are at least somewhat concerned about COVID-19 infection, more than half have resumed the activities they engaged in regularly pre-pandemic. Still though, other than using public transportation and visiting with older relatives, adults who are concerned about infection are less likely to have resumed the activities they did at least monthly prior to the pandemic.

Adults who are more concerned about getting infected with COVID-19 are less likely to have resumed activities.

Percent of adults who did each activity at least monthly before the pandemic and who say they definitely or probably will do each activity in the next few weeks



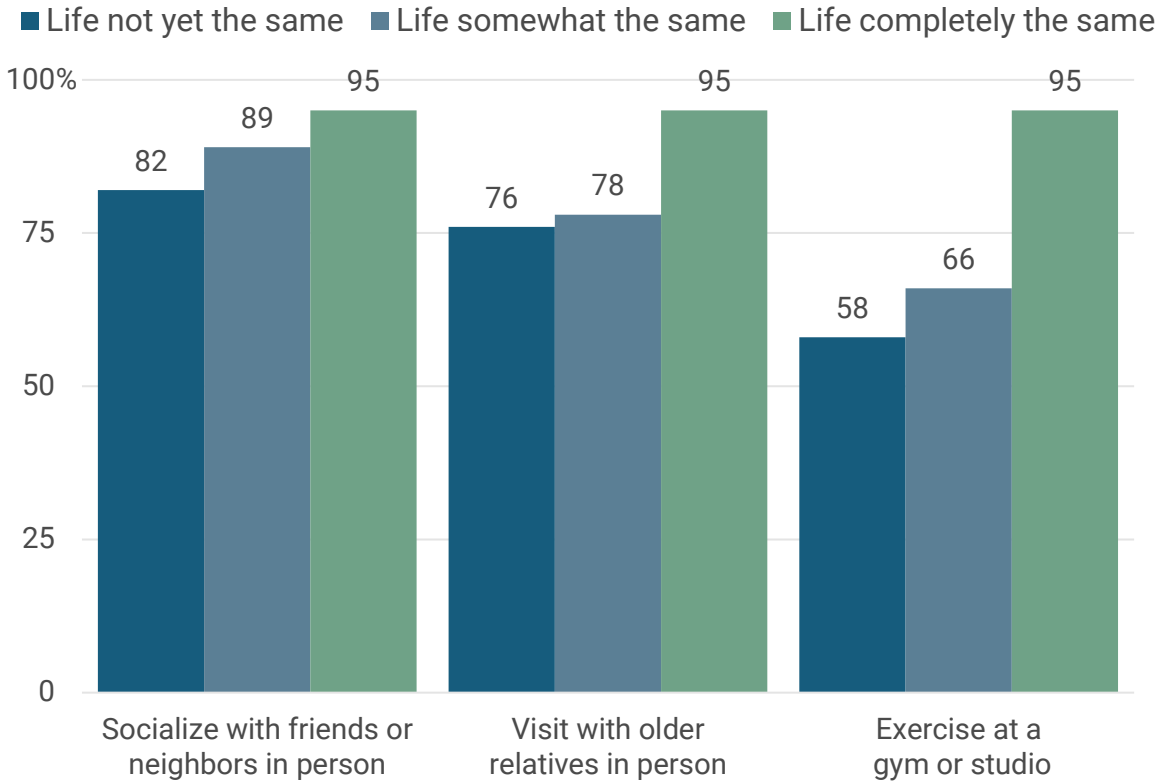
Questions: In the next few weeks, will you personally:

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Those whose lives have not entirely returned to what they were before the pandemic are less likely to be exercising at a gym and visiting older relatives than those whose lives are completely the same. And those whose lives are not yet the same are less likely to be socializing in person than those whose lives somewhat or completely the same.

Adults whose lives are not yet the same as before the pandemic are less likely to have resumed some activities.

Percent of adults who did each activity at least monthly before the pandemic and who say they definitely or probably will do each activity in the next few weeks



Questions: In the next few weeks, will you personally:

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

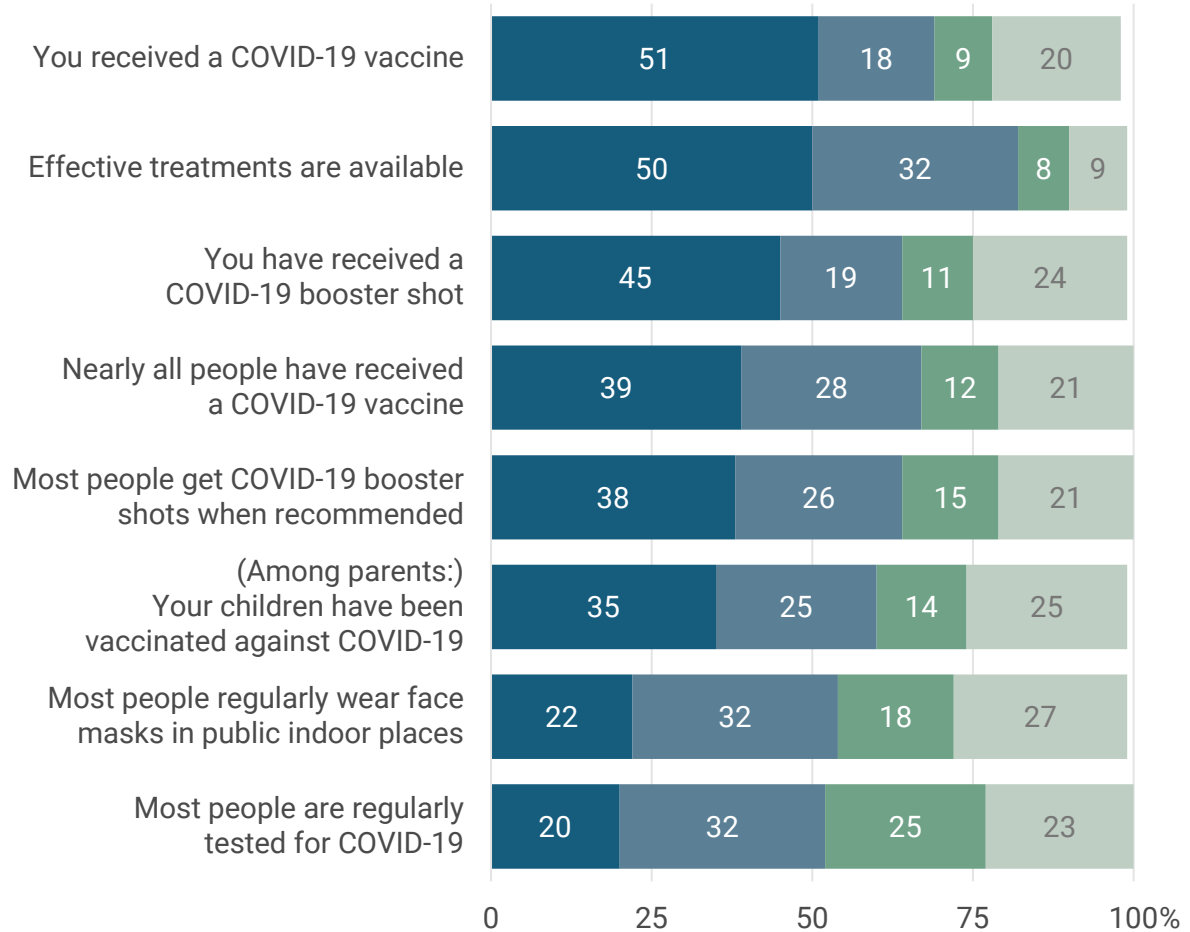
EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS AND BEING VACCINATED CITED MOST OFTEN AS ESSENTIAL TO FULLY PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC LIFE.

To fully participate in public life without feeling at risk of infection for COVID-19, about half of adults cite getting vaccinated and the availability of effective treatments for people who contract the virus as essential. Less than a quarter think regular masking in public indoor places or regular testing are essential.

Vaccines, boosters, and effective treatments are key for people to feel safe participating in public life.

Percent of adults

■ Essential ■ Important but not essential ■ Not too important ■ Not important at all



Questions: How important is it to you that each of the following happens for you to fully participate in public life without feeling at risk of infection with COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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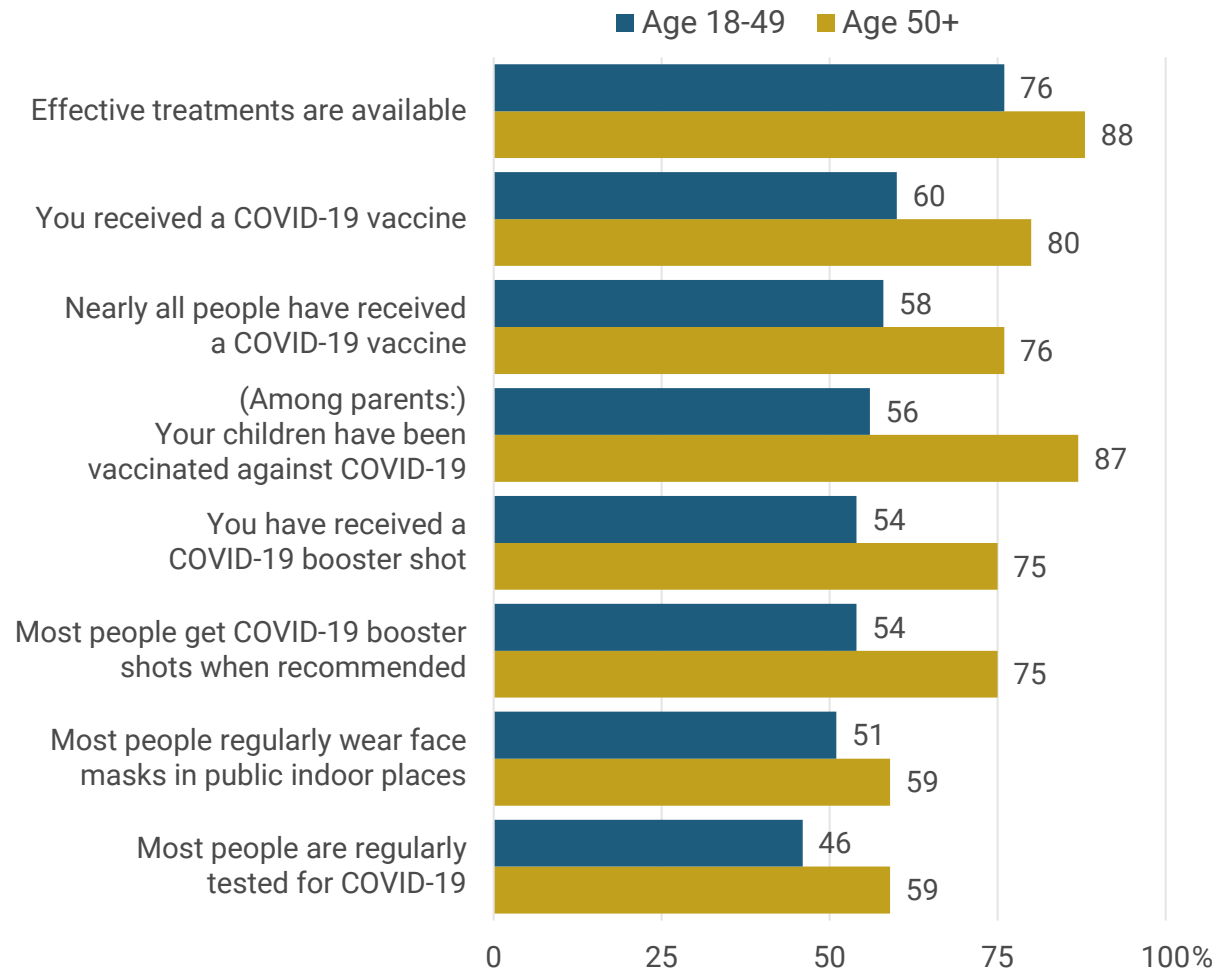
Compared to January of 2021, fewer adults cite most people regularly wearing face masks in public as essential to fully participating in public life (22% vs. 46% in January 2021). However, 14% felt it was not at all important in January, and that has increased to 27%.²

Adults age 50 and older are more likely than younger adults to cite each item asked about as essential or important to feeling safe fully participating in public life.

² <https://apnorc.org/projects/with-omicron-americans-are-taking-more-personal-precautions/>

Adults age 50 and older are more likely to consider various factors important or essential to returning to public life.

Percent of adults who say essential or important



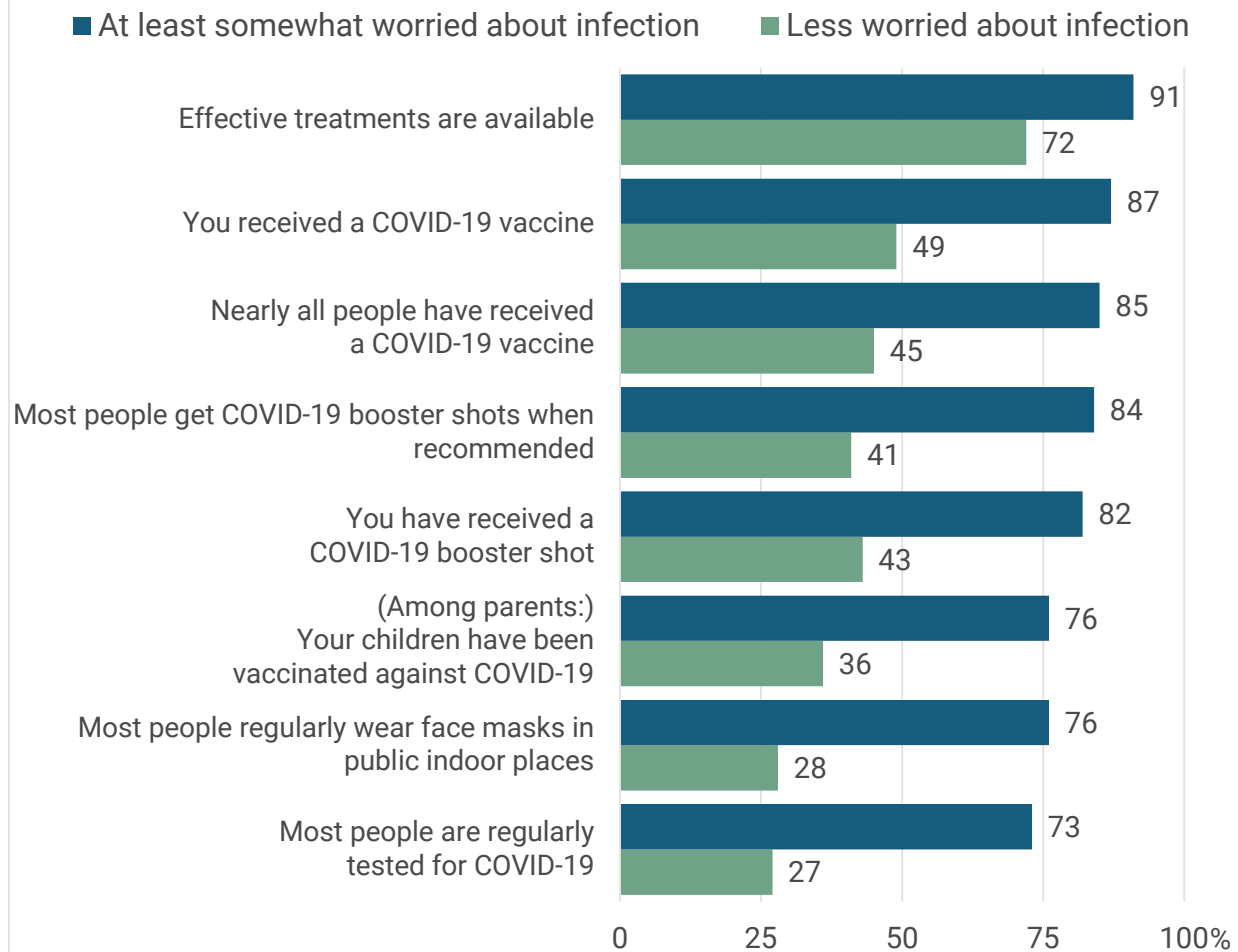
Questions: How important is it to you that each of the following happens for you to fully participate in public life without feeling at risk of infection with COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Adults who are at least somewhat concerned about getting infected with COVID-19 are also more likely to consider each item essential or important to fully participating in public life.

Adults more concerned about COVID-19 are more likely to consider a host of factors as important or essential to returning to public life.

Percent of adults who say essential or important



Questions: How important is it to you that each of the following happens for you to fully participate in public life without feeling at risk of infection with COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

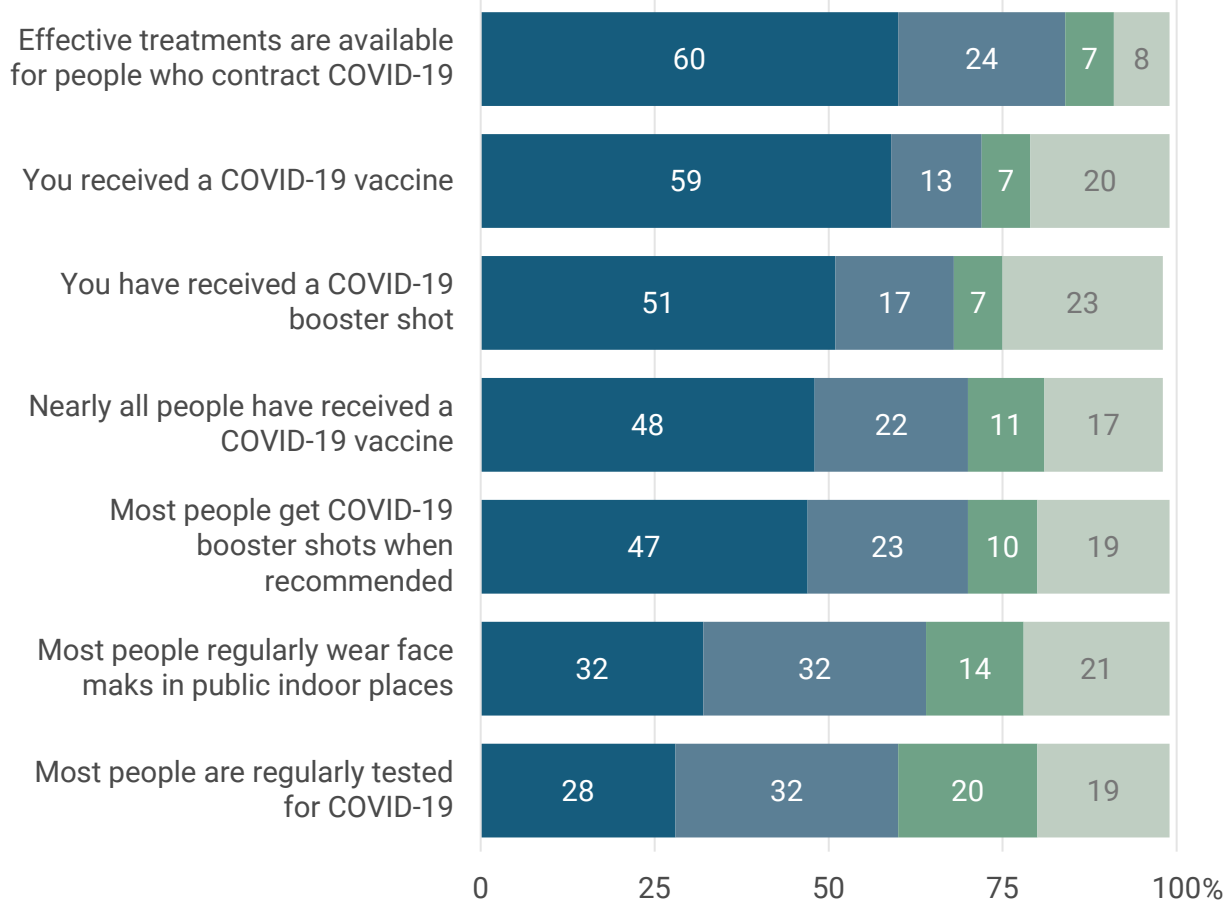
Seventy-eight percent of Black adults and 62% of Hispanic adults consider regular indoor mask wearing as essential or important to safely returning to public life, compared to 44% of white adults. Similarly, 71% of Black adults and 58% of Hispanic adults cite regular testing as essential or important, while just 42% of white adults say the same.

Adults whose lives are not yet the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic cite similar interventions as important to fully participate in public life as the overall population but are more likely to consider them essential.

Vaccines, boosters, and effective treatments are key for adults to feel safe participating in public life.

Percent of adults whose lives are not yet the same as before the pandemic

■ Essential ■ Important but not essential ■ Not too important ■ Not important at all



Questions: How important is it to you that each of the following happens for you to fully participate in public life without feeling at risk of infection with COVID-19?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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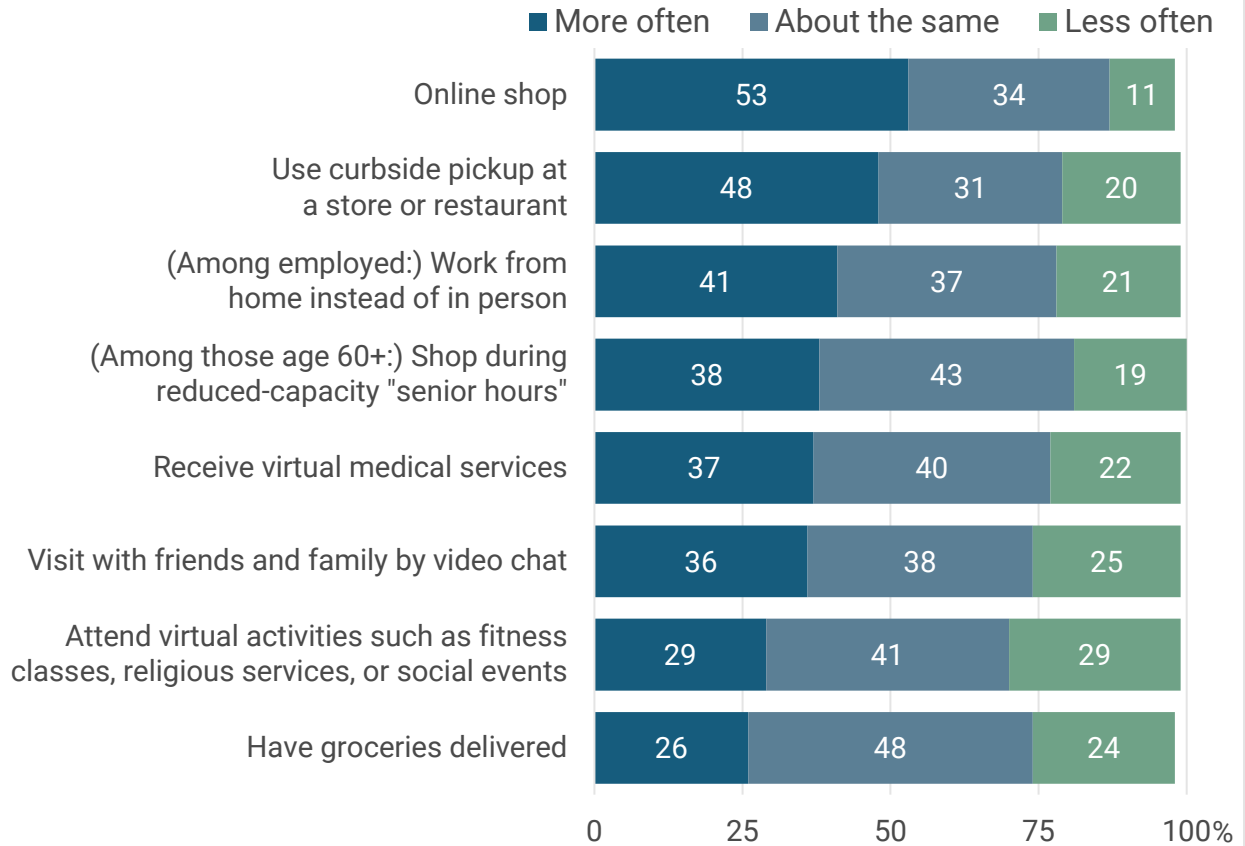
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ADULTS YOUNG AND OLD USED ONLINE AND DELIVERY OPTIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC, BUT NOT EVERYONE EXPECTS TO KEEP USING THEM ONCE THE PANDEMIC ENDS.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many adults increased their use of tools that could reduce the spread of the virus in their everyday transactions and activities. A majority of adults used online shopping more often than they did prior to the pandemic, and slightly less than half increased their use of curbside pickup at stores or restaurants. Among employed adults, 41% worked from home more often than they did in prior years; among adults over 60, 38% increased their use of reduced capacity 'senior hours' while shopping. Just over a third of adults used telehealth and video socializing options more frequently, and about a quarter attended virtual social activities or had groceries delivered more often.

Adults were particularly likely to online shop and use curbside pickup more often during the pandemic than before.

Percent of adults



Questions: During the COVID-19 pandemic, did you do each of the following more often, less often, or about the same as before the pandemic?

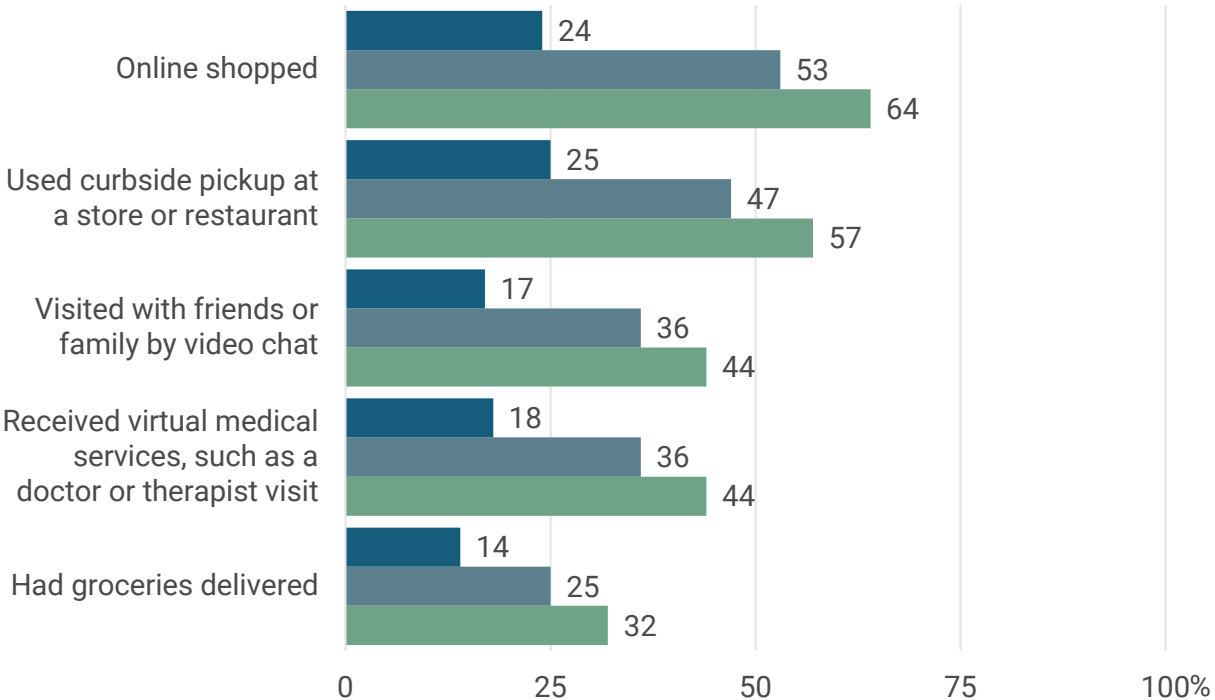
Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Those whose lives are only somewhat or are not yet the same as before the pandemic are more likely to have increased their use of several of these services during the pandemic.

Those whose lives are only somewhat or not yet the same were more likely to have increased their use of services.

Percent of adults who say more often

■ Completely the same ■ Somewhat but not completely the same ■ Not yet the same



Questions: During the COVID-19 pandemic, did you do each of the following more often, less often, or about the same as before the pandemic?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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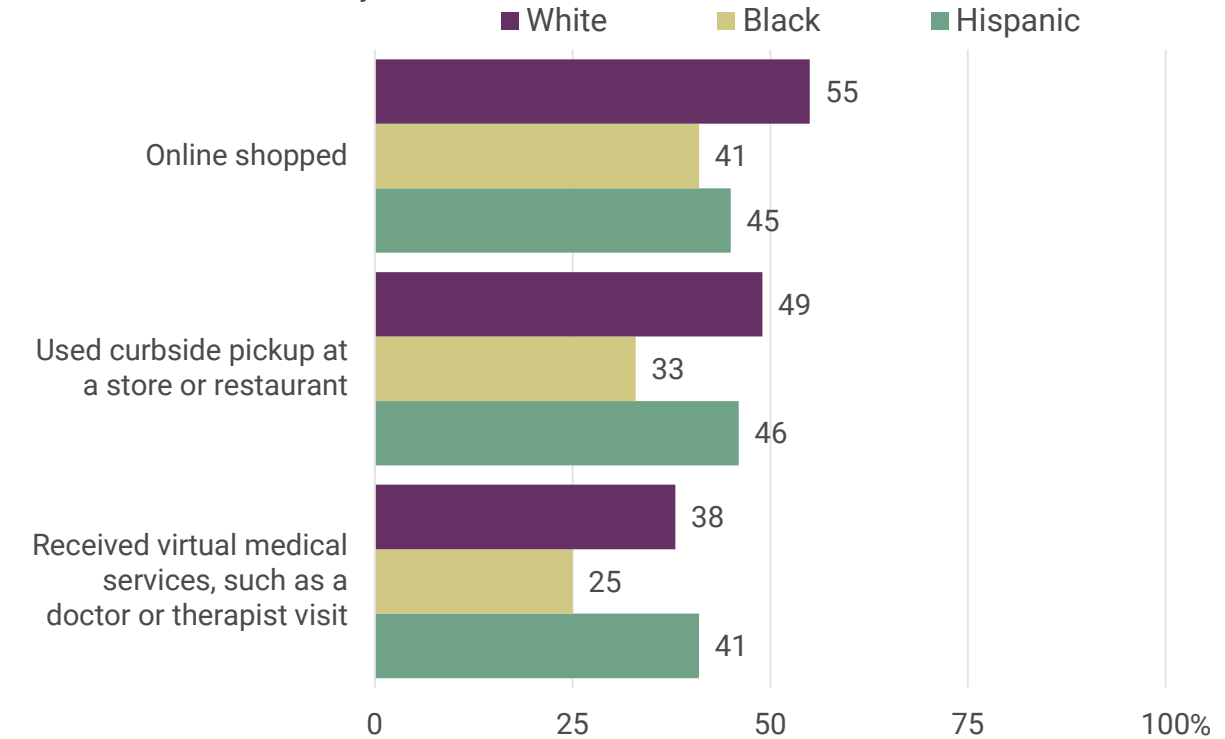
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Other than taking advantage of senior hours, use of these options did not differ between those age 18-49 and those age 50 and older. And though many of these options could be beneficial to someone providing care to an aging loved one, caregivers were no more likely to increase their use of them than non-caregivers.

Issues of equity emerge when looking at uptake of some services by race and ethnicity. White adults are more likely than Black adults to have increased their use of telehealth, curbside pickup, and online shopping during the pandemic. Hispanic adults also outpace Black adults in increasing their use of telehealth.

Black adults were less likely to increase their use of telehealth, curbside pickup, and online shopping during the pandemic compared to white adults.

Percent of adults who say more often



Questions: During the COVID-19 pandemic, did you do each of the following more often, less often, or about the same as before the pandemic?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

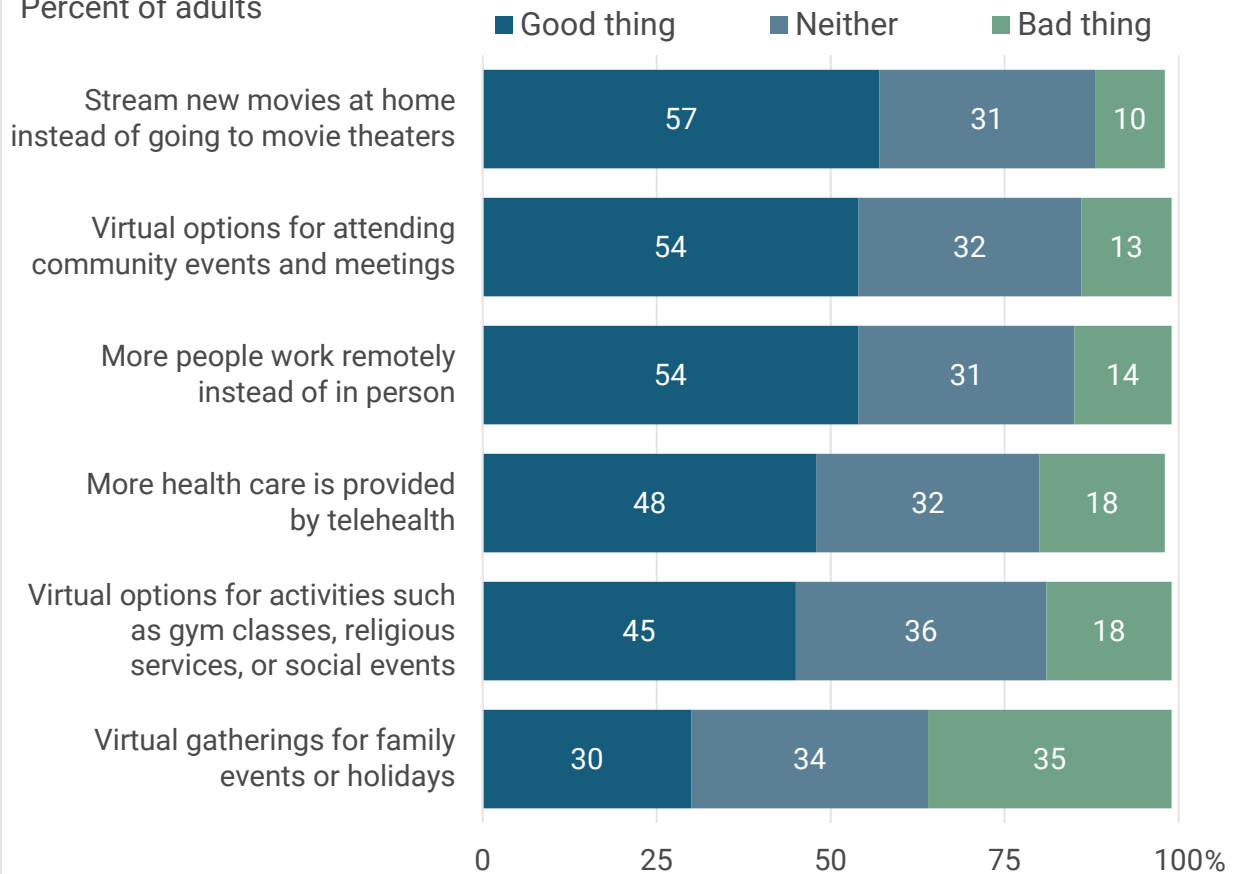
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More than half of the public think streaming movies at home instead of going to the theater, virtual options for attending community events and meetings, and more people working from home are good things to continue after the pandemic. However, virtual gatherings for family events or holidays are seen least favorably. Again, those age 18-49 and those age 50 and older were similarly likely to think each of these would be a good thing rather than a bad thing.

The continued ability to stream movies at home, attend community events virtually, and work remotely after the pandemic would be a good thing to more than half of adults.

Percent of adults



Questions: Each of the following became more common during the pandemic. Do you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or neither a good thing nor a bad thing if each continues after the pandemic?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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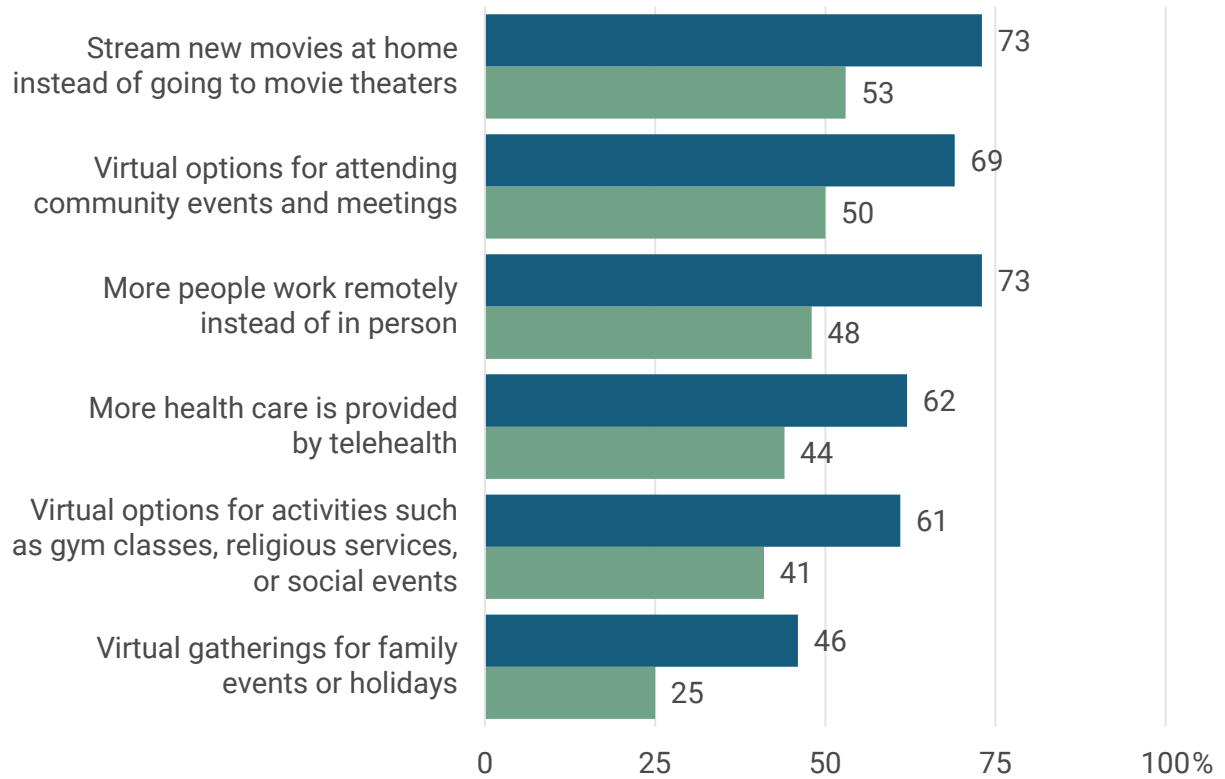
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Adults expressing high levels of worry about COVID-19 are more likely than those who are not as worried to see the continuation of these pandemic-era changes as a good thing. Continuing virtual gatherings for family events and holidays is the least popular among both groups, but nearly half of those who are most worried about the virus would consider it a good thing for these to continue.

Adults worried about COVID-19 are more likely to see each of these pandemic-era changes as a good thing if they were to continue.

Percent of adults who say good thing

■ Very or extremely worried about infection ■ Less worried about infection



Questions: Each of the following became more common during the pandemic. Do you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or neither a good thing nor a bad thing if each continues after the pandemic?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

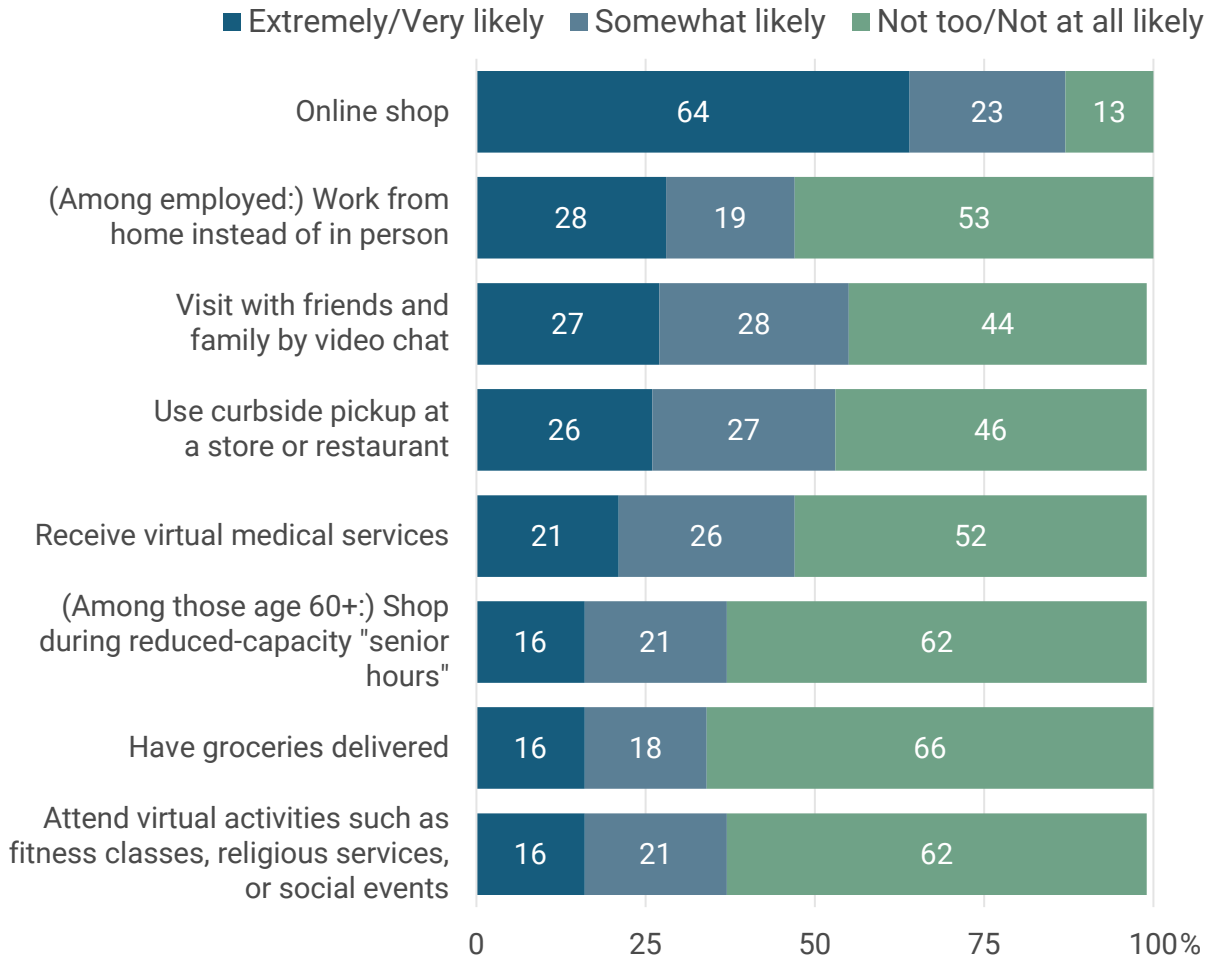
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Expectations for using many of these services post-pandemic are low. More than 8 in 10 adults are at least somewhat likely to continue to online shop, but only about half say the same about visiting with friends and family by video chat, working from home, using curbside pickup, and getting virtual medical care. Fewer are likely to use senior hours, grocery delivery, or attend virtual fitness classes, religious services, or social events.

Few expect to continue using pandemic-era services like grocery delivery or attending virtual activities.

Percent of adults



Questions: After the COVID-19 pandemic is over, how likely is it that you will do each of the following at least some of the time?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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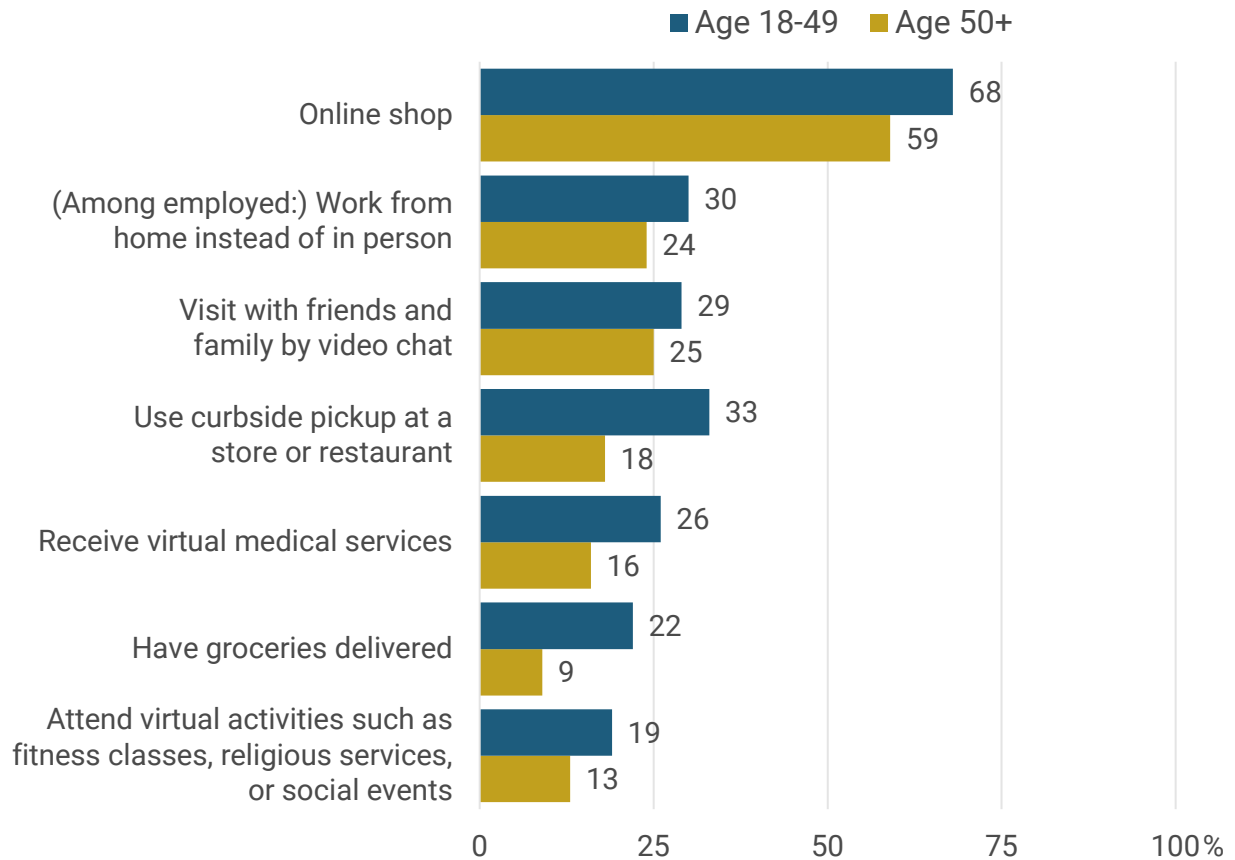
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Black (27%) and Hispanic (19%) adults are more likely than white adults (10%) to continue to attend virtual activities such as fitness classes, religious services, or social events after the pandemic is over.

While all these services would be useful for helping adults age in their communities, adults age 50 and older are less likely than those age 18-49 to expect to continue receiving telehealth, have their groceries delivered, and employ curbside pickup at stores or restaurants. Those age 50 and older did not show greater likelihood of using any of the other services compared to younger adults.

Adults age 50 and older are less likely to continue using curbside pickup, telehealth, and grocery delivery once the pandemic ends compared to those age 18-49.

Percent of adults who say extremely/very likely



Questions: After the COVID-19 pandemic is over, how likely is it that you will do each of the following at least some of the time?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

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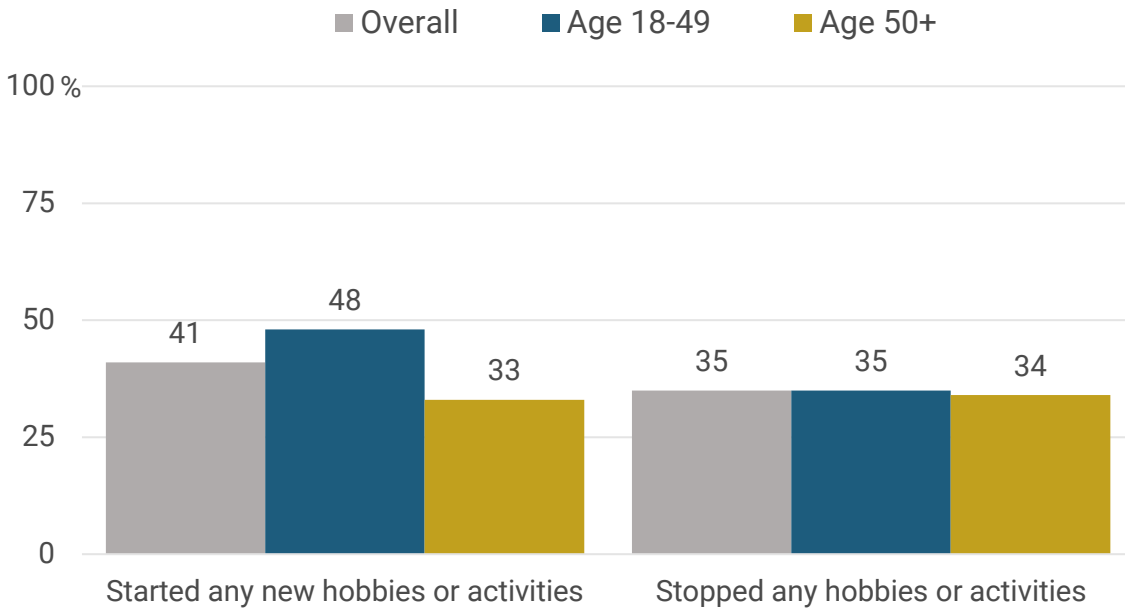
Those who provide care to an aging loved one are more likely to continue working from home (32% vs. 20%).

MANY ADULTS PICKED UP NEW HOBBIES OR TRIED NEW SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC.

When it comes to other life changes during the pandemic, 41% of adults started a new hobby or activity during the pandemic and 35% stopped one. Those age 18-49 were more likely to have started a new hobby compared to those age 50 and older.

Younger adults were more likely than older adults to start new hobbies during the pandemic.

Percent of adults



Questions: Did you do each of the following at any point during the pandemic or not?

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

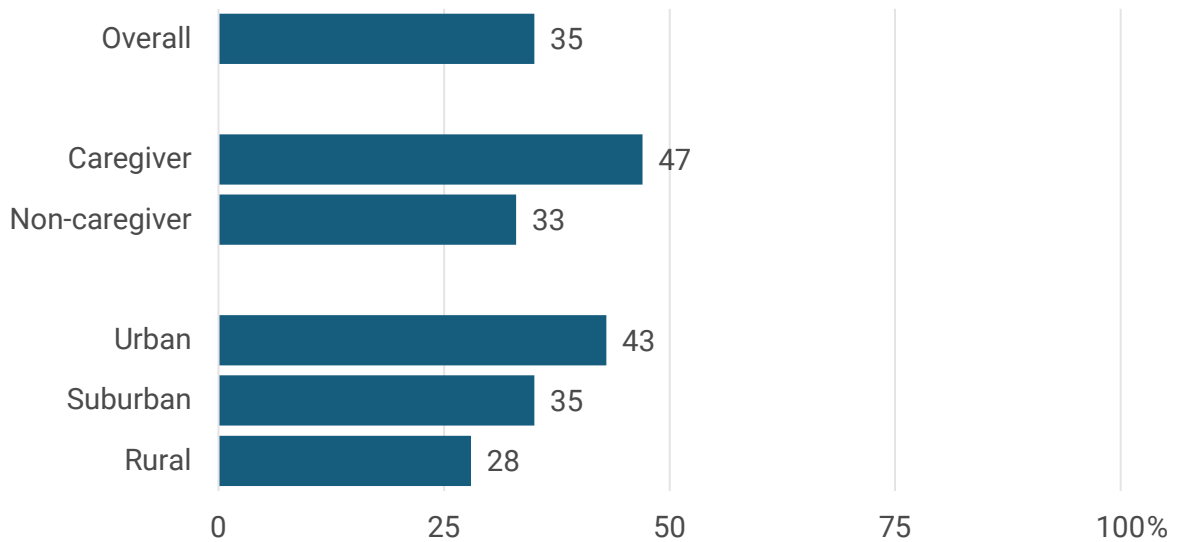
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While the likelihood of stopping a hobby or activity did not vary according to age, those who provide care to a loved one and those who live in urban areas were more likely to have ended one of their pastimes during the pandemic.

Caregivers and adults living in urban areas were more likely to have stopped a hobby or activity during the pandemic.

Percent of adults who stopped a hobby or activity during the pandemic



Questions: Did you do each of the following at any point during the pandemic or not? [Stop any hobbies or activities]

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



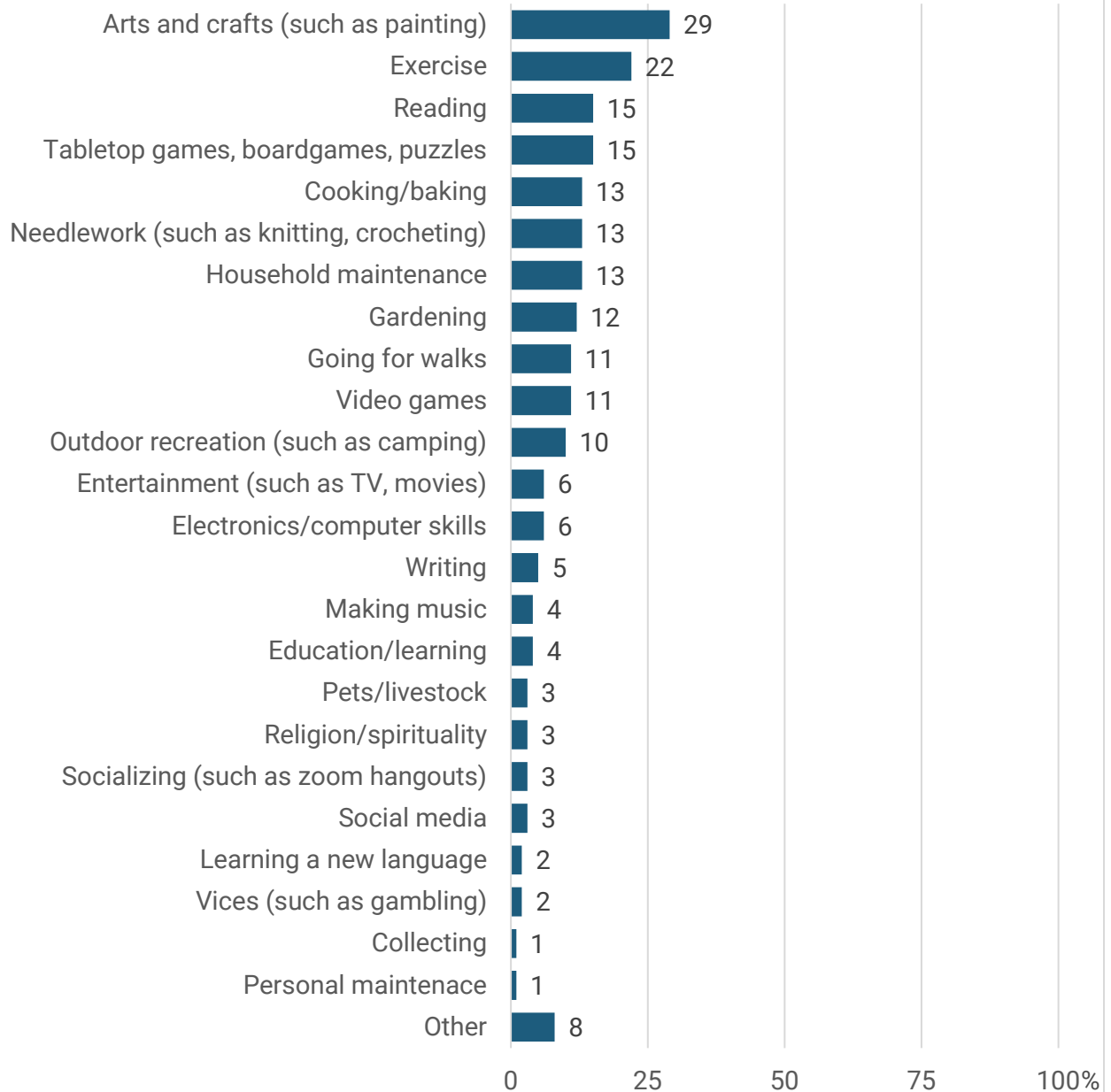
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Respondents who started a hobby or activity could list up to three that they began during the pandemic. The most common new hobbies were arts and crafts (29%), exercising (22%), and reading (15%). While those age 18-49 were more likely to start playing video games than those age 50 and older (15% vs. 3%), younger and older adults were similarly likely to take up the rest of these types of hobbies.



Adults started a wide variety of hobbies during the pandemic, most commonly arts & crafts, exercise, and reading.

Percent of adults who started a new hobby



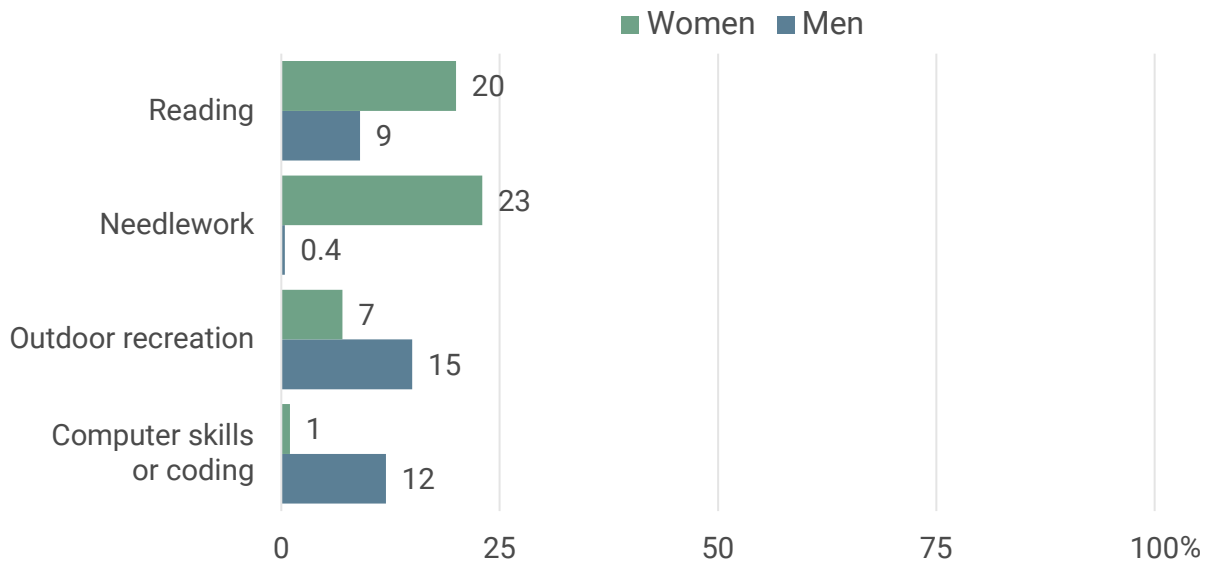
Question: What new hobbies or activities did you start during the pandemic? Please list up to 3 hobbies or activities. [OPEN-ENDED]

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

On the other hand, men and women showed more differences. Of those who began a new hobby during the pandemic, women were more likely than men to take up needlework such as knitting or crochet (23% vs. less than 1%) and reading (20% vs. 9%). Men were more likely than women to have taken up hobbies involving outdoor recreation such as camping, hunting, or fishing (15% vs. 7%) or learning computer skills such as coding or programming (12% vs. 1%).

Men and women who started hobbies during the pandemic demonstrated different interests.

Percent of adults who started a new hobby



Questions: What new hobbies or activities did you start during the pandemic? Please list up to 3 hobbies or activities. [OPEN-ENDED]

Source: AP-NORC/TSF poll conducted May 12-16, 2022, with 1,001 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study, funded by [The SCAN Foundation](#), was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and The SCAN Foundation collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame or a secondary national address frame, both with over 97% coverage of all U.S. addresses, and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, or field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings population. Of note for this study, the panel would also exclude adults who live in some institutional types of settings, such as skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes, depending on how addresses are listed for the facility.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between May 12 and May 16, 2022, with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,001 completed the survey—948 via the web and 53 via telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from an NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$3) for completing the survey.

The final stage completion rate is 21.0%, the weighted household panel recruitment rate is 19.5%, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 77.1%, for a cumulative response rate of 3.2%. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 47 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2022 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over. The sample is also weighted to match the average of self-identified party identification in the previous two waves of the AmeriSpeak Omnibus survey and this current survey.

Complete questions and results are available at <https://www.longtermcarepoll.org/project/americans-readiness-to-emerge-from-the-pandemic-and-how-their-daily-lives-have-changed/>.

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ABOUT THE SCAN FOUNDATION

The SCAN Foundation is an independent public charity dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. Our mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. For more information, visit www.TheSCANFoundation.org.

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