



# A survey report on special dietary habits of the gym going people of Northern India

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## Abstract

Having a balanced diet has become a necessity for many people, nowadays. An ideal balanced diet is the one which contains all the major food groups including adequate protein, carbohydrates, high quality fats, vitamins and minerals. Healthy dietary habits are the pillars of good and nutritious lifestyle. Likewise, there is an ideal dietary requirement for a person going to gym or who is involved in sports. Therefore, a survey was conducted and reported on 100 people both men and woman on an online basis in the state of Punjab and Haryana. This survey reported on the individuals different domains like age, income-group, types of workout done, facilities used in gym, reason to go to gym, changes after going to gym, but the most important factor was to check which gender uses to gym most, dietary habits and outer source of energy and protein to enhance performance other than food. There are many social factors that affect the ratio of boys to girls exercising in the gym. Combination of nutritious food and gym/exercise can make a person live healthy and better life. There are many new products in market to enhance the endurance, but their consumption varies. Based on the information collected, a result was developed and reported here. However, an increase in the trend of going to gym has been observed among the youth from age 21 to 26.

**Key words:** Gym, dietary habits, social factors, health benefits

## Introduction

A gymnasium also known as a 'gym' is a fitness centre. This word is derived from ancient Greece word gymnasium [Partridge, 1984]. Fitness gyms vary in location, membership fees and serve different social and economic milieus. In order to attract customers, most gyms offer more than a plain and functional work out environment but present themselves as family oriented places. Depending on the size and the target group, multi-purpose amenities encourage pre- or post-training activities, for example at their spas and beauty centres or they organize social activities at the weekend (Stewart, Smith, & Moroney, 2013). Consequently, one may think that the more time gym users spend at their gym, the more they engage with its material and social

environment, and the more they are affected by the same so that the gym becomes more than just a training site for them [CerenDoğan, 2015]. The concept of gymnasium is not very old in India but there were few games like Kabaddi, Akhadas, Mallakhamba etc. which includes motor skills and muscular power. Gyms have never lost their popularity since their opening and are still favourite place of health conscious people. Gym helps to improve muscle strength and boost endurance [NIN, 2011]. Exercise delivers oxygen and nutrients to tissues and helps cardiovascular system work efficiently. The healthy heart and lung improves the body energy and helps to tackle daily chores. It also help in controlling weight, reducing risk of diseases [like cardio-vascular, diabetes, lowers level of LDL, osteoporosis], improves mood, boosts energy, promotes better sleep, boost happy hormones, improve muscle strength, balance and flexibility [NIN, 2011]. Diet plays an important role in getting the desired result of exercise. A proper diet and the adequate knowledge of the time of intake is very important. In this survey a data is collected on various types of exercises, dietary requirements as per the type of exercise and the time of food intake. There are different types of exercise for different purpose based on this result is compiled and tabulated.

There are several types of exercise based on intensity like moderate intensity, high and light intensity exercise. But, generally there are two forms for exercise those are aerobic and anaerobic training exercise. Therefore, different diet is followed by a person based on requirement. These food choices are boiled sweet potatoes, oats and skim milk with nuts and raisins, peanut butter sandwich, fruits like banana, low-fat Greek yogurt and water, grilled chicken, brown rice, green beans and unsweetened-tea, turkey and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread with lettuce, tomato and avocado [Amy Goodson, 2018]. A perfect diet is one that is healthy and provides adequate amount of water, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, dietary fibre, vitamin and minerals. A daily water intake of 3.7 L is recommended for adult men and 2.7 L is recommended for adult women [Sawka, Cheuvront & Carter, 2005]. The World Health Organization [WHO] has recommended taking at least 60–75% of total energy from carbohydrates, 10-15% of energy from protein and 15-20% of energy from fats for a normal individual. The intake of calories and protein also depends on gender, weight and height of the individual. Simple carbohydrates are needed after workout for quick recovery of glycogen stores, while complex are required before exercise [Gulamhusein, 2020]. The selection of protein source depends on the aim of individual i.e. muscle growth or just muscle and skin toning [Gulamhusein, 2020]. The intake of plant based oils rich in unsaturated fatty acids [Gulamhusein, 2020] should be more in comparison to the saturated fat. The intake of saturated fatty acids should be limited below 10% of total energy requirement as they digest slower in the stomach and take away oxygen and energy-delivering blood from muscles.

The data obtained through survey revealed that majority of the population goes to gym for fitness and everyone follows their own specific diet. Among both the sexes the ratio of males to females was more, and also male performed more vigorous, high intensity exercise while female tend to bend toward body toning.

## Materials and methods

To conduct the survey a pre-tested, non- disguised questionnaire was prepared. Majority of the questions were kept open-ended to gather maximum information from the selected respondents. Questions were framed to elicit information regarding the number of people going to gym, their pattern of eating, and exercise form. Apart from it this survey helped in making a comparison among people regarding their age and profession, the

total number of people on whom survey was performed was 100 in total. The survey was conducted in Punjab and Haryana on online basis as these two states are the major production site of players, athletes and also a major contributor to the fitness industry. Based on the general information an image is developed about the fitness sector in India. The data on the people exercising was classified and compiled. There were many questions so each questions data is collected separately and tabulated.

## Results and discussion

Results of the survey revealed information regarding the age, gender, effects seen after joining gym, duration of exercise per day, number of days of exercise per week, types of exercise, which group of people going to gym most, profession, and the dietary consumption pattern. The related information collected was further compiled, processed and explained in the sections under different sub-headings. During the survey it was revealed that there is a great difference in the number of boys to girl and the exercise type adopted. Similarly, the survey revealed that middle-class man prefers to go to gym more than the mediocre woman from the age of 20 to 26 years. The time spend in a gym on an average is 3 hours for 6 days per week in a row. However, the ratio of vegan to non-vegetarian was same now people are more focused on the balanced diet instead of bending towards a particular diet aiming only one part whether protein, carbohydrate or fat consumption with the whey protein powder as additional source of protein because protein requirement increases for the gym people for muscle repair and replenishment. The facilities which are used maximum in the gym are machine equipment. Moreover, man are engaged more in the heavy intensity exercise to make biceps, triceps and chest whereas, woman prefer moderate and low-intensity exercise to make body lean, for body shaping, and muscle toning. Apart from fitness trainers gym is usually more equipped by the students those aiming for fit body due to overweight, body shaming, medically suggested, or to increase height. Rather than these athletes also use gym for competition. In the heavy –intensity exercise dumbbells, barbells, and machines are used most; in the low-intensity exercise trade mill is used most. It is concluded from the survey that gym helped users to achieve their fitness goal.

## Gender, age and profession

As per the survey report it was found that maximum number of the gender having hold on the gym are males in comparison to women, 80% males accounted to exercise in gym while only 20% were females. In both the genders the majority of the population was between the ages of 21 to 26 year which shows that youth is more in comparison to elderly they are seen quite less in numbers. Students from middle-income group are the most among the people of other profession going to gym. Trainers, athletes number in gym is not same as regular people doing gym it is quite less because gym is gaining popularity as more people are becoming health conscious and aware therefore, there is no equilibrium, the number of trainers is decreasing, which has dramatically led to increase in the hiring of trainers. So, there are some people hired as trainers lacking in general knowledge regarding diet intake which significantly causes a negative effect on the health of person. Therefore, It is always suggested to consult a certified health consultant.

**Table 1: Profession having access to gym among the number of people represented by n**

Profession	Data (n=100)
Student	44%
Self employed	35%
Trainers or athletes	30%
Business person	1%

### Frequency of gym going

Gym places are seen busy during the whole week apart from Sunday from morning till evening (6 days a week). Students seen coming to gym as per their convenience at different time. Apart from their busy schedule they do not skip it. In this survey it was reported that some people joined gym few days or month ago while the major section of the people are coming to gym from more than a year.

The maximum time spent by a person on an average is at least 3 hours per day in a gym.

### Reason of going to gym

There are list of reasons given by a person regarding the gym operation. It was reported that main aim of going to gym is to maintain health and body in order to remain healthy. Boys reported going mainly to build up muscles while girls were seen more for lean body, muscle toning. There are few reasons tabulated below.

**Table 2: Reason for joining gym among the number of people represented by n**

Reason	Data (n=100)
Medical reason	2%
Muscle toning	15%
Body building	35%
Gain or lose weight	38%

### Effects seen after joining gym

It has been observed that majority of the population found effective going to gym. After joining gym they achieved their desired result which increased their enthusiasm and is also a reason of attracting more people to gym. 95.4% are found satisfied by the results shown by their body after joining gym and doing exercise.

### Types of exercise

The survey questionnaire involved different types of exercise classification. The main classification is aerobic and anaerobic but there is sub classification of light-intensity, moderate-intensity and high-intensity exercise. The first type of exercise contain different categories like under light-intensity comes walking, jogging,

skipping, cycling, etc. Under the category of moderate-intensity running, cardio, dumbbells, barbells, etc. comes. However, under the category of high-intensity exercise weightlifting, machine workout comes. As discussed earlier, men usually preferred to do high-intensity exercise and moderate-intensity exercise whereas, women usually workout for maintaining bodyso, they are more involved in light-intensity and moderate-intensity exercise.

**Table 3: Types of exercise done among the number of people represented by n**

Exercise types	Data (n=100)
Light-intensity exercise	20%
Moderate-intensity exercise	25%
High-intensity exercise	55%

### Diet pattern

Nowadays people are switching more towards vegan food (soy products, milk and yoghurt, green leafy vegetables, beans and legumes, fruits and vegetables, and sprouts, soup etc.) same is seen in the case of people doing exercise. Plant protein is found very good source of protein and it is healthy, affordable, and easily available. Animal source of food (egg white, chicken, and fish) is questionable, expensive, and not available every day.

**Table 4: Food preference among a number of people represented by n**

Food preference	Data (n=100)
Vegetarian	65%
Non-vegetarian	35%

People doing gym are also following diet patterns in which it is seen that balanced diet is followed by majority of the people while few people follow protein rich diet, carbohydrate rich diet, whereas keto diet, and dash diet are not even practised nowadays.

**Table 5: Type of diet adopted among the number of people represented by n**

Diet adopted	Data (n=100)
DASH diet	-

NASH diet	-
Carbohydrate rich diet	1%
Protein rich diet	10%
Balanced diet	89%

In the young generation protein isolate consumption is seen a common thing. In order to increase the protein content for replenishment, wear and tear of cells, and muscle loss protein is consumed from other outer sources apart from the protein intake from food, namely whey protein a packed, powdered form of protein is consumed by almost every boy and girl going to gym.

### Conclusions

It is clear from this survey that youth is very conscious about health and fitness freak; fitness sector will inflate more and account more to the nation's economy. Mainly, boys were found most between ages 21-26 in comparison to women. Heavy exercise like dumbbells, weightlifting is performed most by boys whereas, girls are attracted towards body shaping. In the current scenario, high class people often go to gym compared to middle class. Gyms are found fully loaded 6 days a week instead of Sunday because of increasing demand and public interest. A particular diet pattern is followed by everyone suggested by trainer or any health counsellor or dietician accompanied by protein namely whey protein as an external source of protein.

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