



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

# Stress in America

Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist

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## Stress in America New York City Report

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Prepared For:  
**The American Psychological Association**

Prepared By:  
**Harris Interactive Inc.**  
**Public Affairs and Policy**

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## Table of Contents

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☑ Background and Objectives	3
☑ Methodology and Sample	3
☑ Notes on Reading This Report	4
☑ Key Survey Findings	5
☑ Detailed Survey Findings	6
○ Perceptions of Personal Stress	6
○ Impact of Stress	7
○ Managing Stress	8
○ Stress in the Workplace	10
▪ Workplace Environment	10
▪ Balancing Work and Family	11
▪ Managing Workplace Stress	11
○ Health Behaviors and Provider Intervention	12
☑ APA Contact Information	14

## **Background and Objectives**

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The American Psychological Association (APA) commissioned Harris Interactive Inc. to conduct a survey to understand the perceptions of stress and its impact among the general public.

The goal of this research is to draw attention to the implications of stress and foster appreciation of the mind/body link as a key component of good overall health. This research is intended for public release to generate media interest in overall health and well-being and specifically on mental health.

## **Methodology and Sample**

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The Stress in America survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of APA between July 20, 2009, and August 4, 2009, among 1,568 adults aged 18 and older who reside in the U.S., including an oversample of 208 adults aged 18 and older who reside in New York City. In the 2008 research, 228 NYC residents were included in the oversample.

Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income among the entire population and within the specific Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSAs) for each city as designated by the US Office of Management and Budget. Propensity score weighting also was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. population aged 18 and older. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

## Notes on Reading This Report

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This report focuses only on the views of residents within the New York City MSA and the general population. For a review of the full topline results for additional cities please refer to the previously prepared Interview Schedule.

“Metropolitan Statistical Areas” (MSAs) are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas — contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature.

## Key Survey Findings

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**Work, money and the economy continue to be the most commonly cited causes of stress among New Yorkers; however, results indicate that stress may have tapered off since last year.**

- The percentage of New Yorkers rating common stressors as a significant source of stress decreased for each response listed.
  - There were considerable decreases in the percentage of respondents who reported that the economy, housing costs and money were sources of stress.
- The percentage of NYC residents reporting an average stress level in the extreme range has remained the same since last year (29 percent); however, the percentage of respondents rating their stress as low increased from 17 percent to 25 percent.
- A higher percentage of NYC residents report they are doing enough to manage their stress in 2009 compared with 2008.

**Several measures suggest that New York workers are less satisfied with their workplace environment than they were in 2008.**

- Nearly half of New Yorkers (47 percent) agree they typically feel tense or stressed out during their workday. This is a slight increase from the 44 percent of NYC residents that reported feeling tense or stressed during the workday last year.
- The percentage of New York workers who are satisfied with the ways that their employer helps them balance work and non-work has decreased from 41 percent to 28 percent in the last year.
- About half of NYC workers (51 percent) agree job demands have interfered with their ability to fulfill family or home responsibilities, a slight increase from last year's findings (46 percent).

**While New Yorkers rate their health relatively high overall, about the same percentage have been told by a provider that they have a chronic condition and have received lifestyle recommendations as adults nationally.**

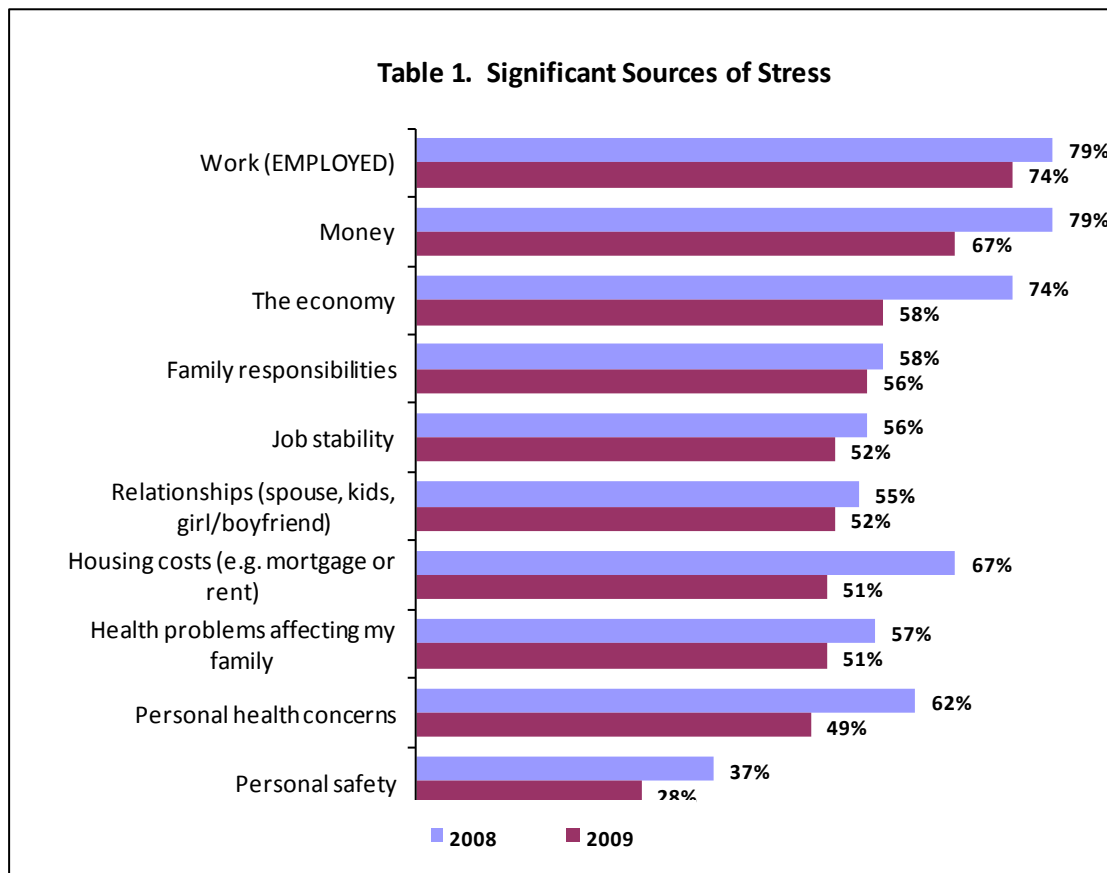
- Half of New Yorkers (50 percent) view their health as excellent or very good compared to 40 percent of Americans overall; however, nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers have been told they have a chronic condition (62 percent).
- Most New Yorkers have been advised by a provider to make one or more lifestyle changes (70 percent, the same as the national percentage).
- While New Yorkers report similar barriers to adults nationally, they are more likely to report that nothing prevented them from making changes (40 percent vs. 31 percent).

## Detailed Survey Findings

### *Perceptions of Personal Stress*

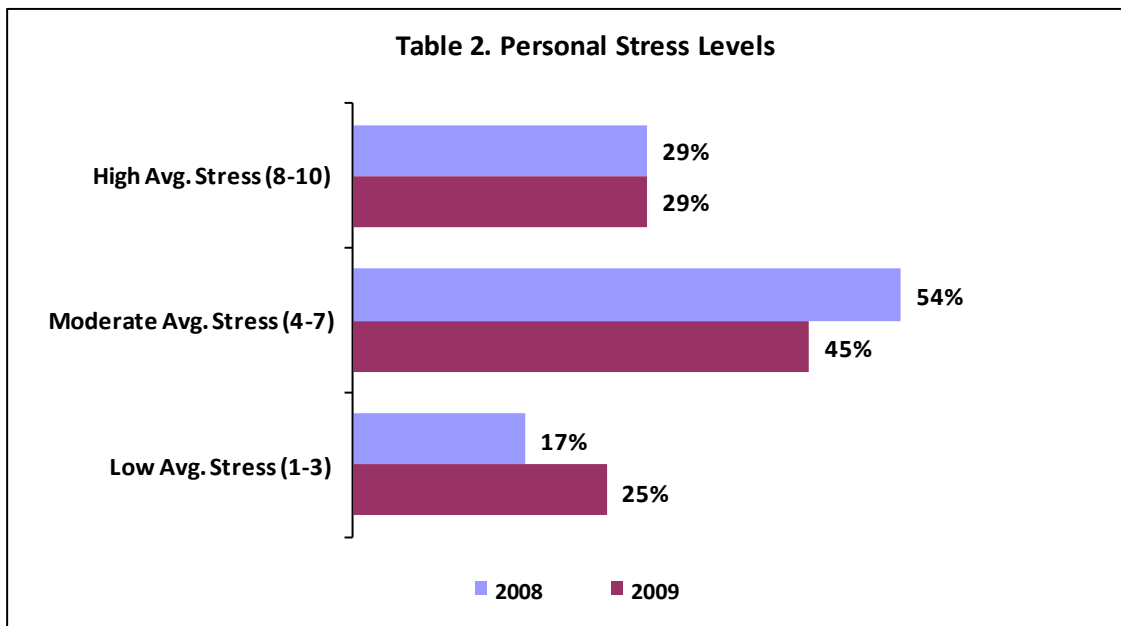
The percentage of New Yorkers rating common stressors as significant sources of stress decreased for each item examined in the survey. The biggest decreases were seen for the economy, housing costs and personal health concerns.

- Work, money and the economy continue to be the most commonly cited causes of stress among New Yorkers; however, the economy is less likely to be seen as a significant source of stress as it was last year. (See Table 1.)
  - The percentage of respondents indicating the economy as a significant source of stress decreased significantly from 74 percent in 2008 to 58 percent in 2009.
- The percentage of NYC residents citing housing costs as a significant source of stress also saw a significant decline in 2009 from 67 percent to 51 percent.
- Significantly fewer New Yorkers mentioned money as a significant source of stress when compared to last year (67 percent vs. 79 percent in 2008).



**A greater percentage of New Yorkers in 2009 rate their stress in the low range and a higher percentage report they are doing enough to manage their stress, compared to last year.**

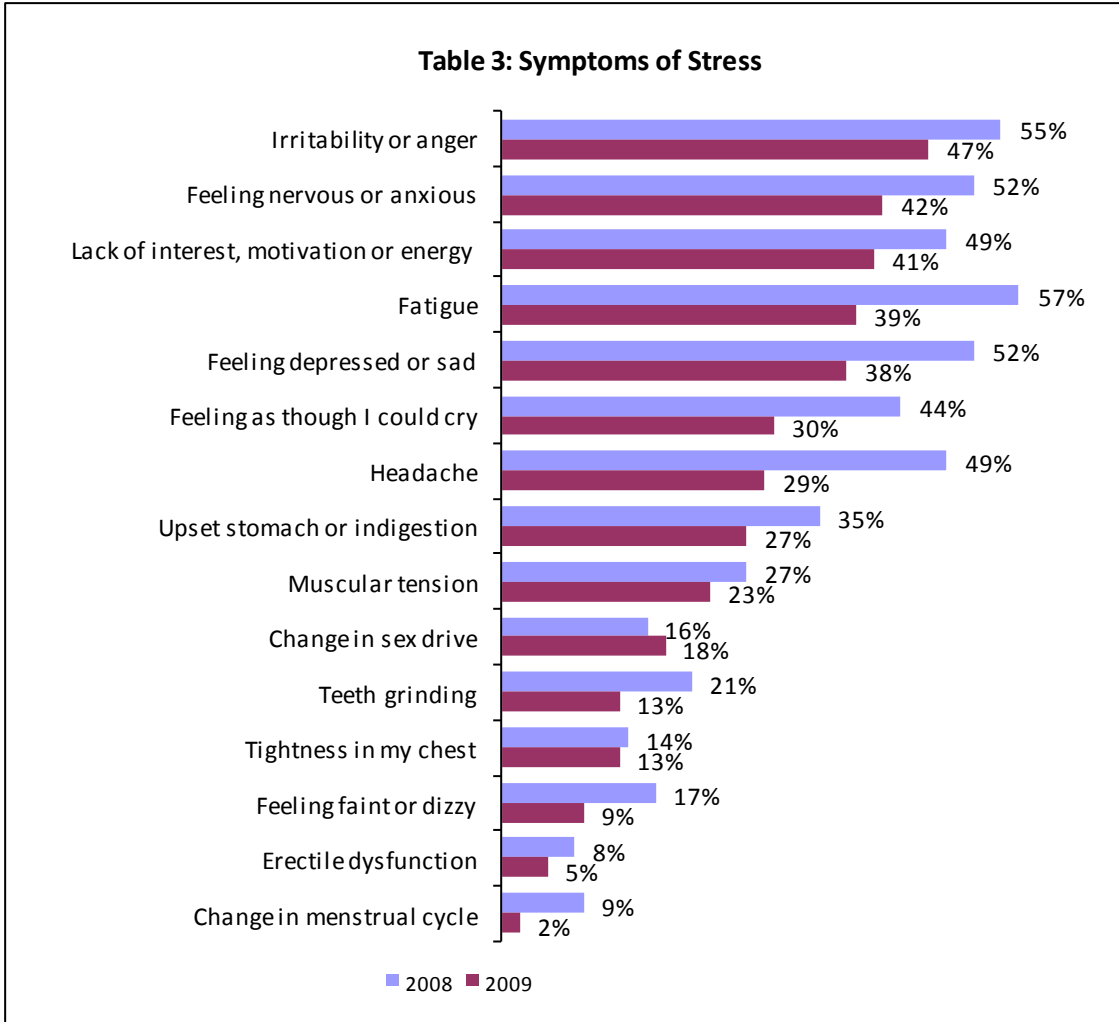
- The percentage of NYC residents reporting an average stress level in the extreme range (8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale) has remained the same since last year (29 percent); however, the percentage of respondents rating their stress as low (1, 2 or 3 on a 10-point scale) increased from 17 percent to 25 percent. (See Table 2.)
- A higher percentage of NYC residents feel they are doing enough to manage their stress compared to last year's findings (55 percent vs. 48 percent in 2008).
- In comparison to 2008, about four in 10 NYC residents say their stress has increased over the past year, consistent with the proportion who felt this way in 2007 (47 percent).



### ***Impact of Stress***

**New Yorkers reported fewer physical symptoms attributable to stress in 2009 than they did last year.**

- The percentage of NYC residents reporting they have lain awake at night because they were feeling stressed fell from 55 percent in 2008 to 47 percent in 2009.
- There was also a slight decrease in the percentage of New Yorkers reporting they ate too much or ate unhealthy foods because they were feeling stressed. The percentage declined from 56 percent to 53 percent.
- A smaller percentage of New Yorkers this year report they have skipped a meal due to stress. The decline was from 49 percent in 2008 to 38 percent in 2009.
- The percentage of New Yorkers experiencing other symptoms detailed in Table 3 in the past month as a result of stress fell from 2008 for nearly all symptoms.

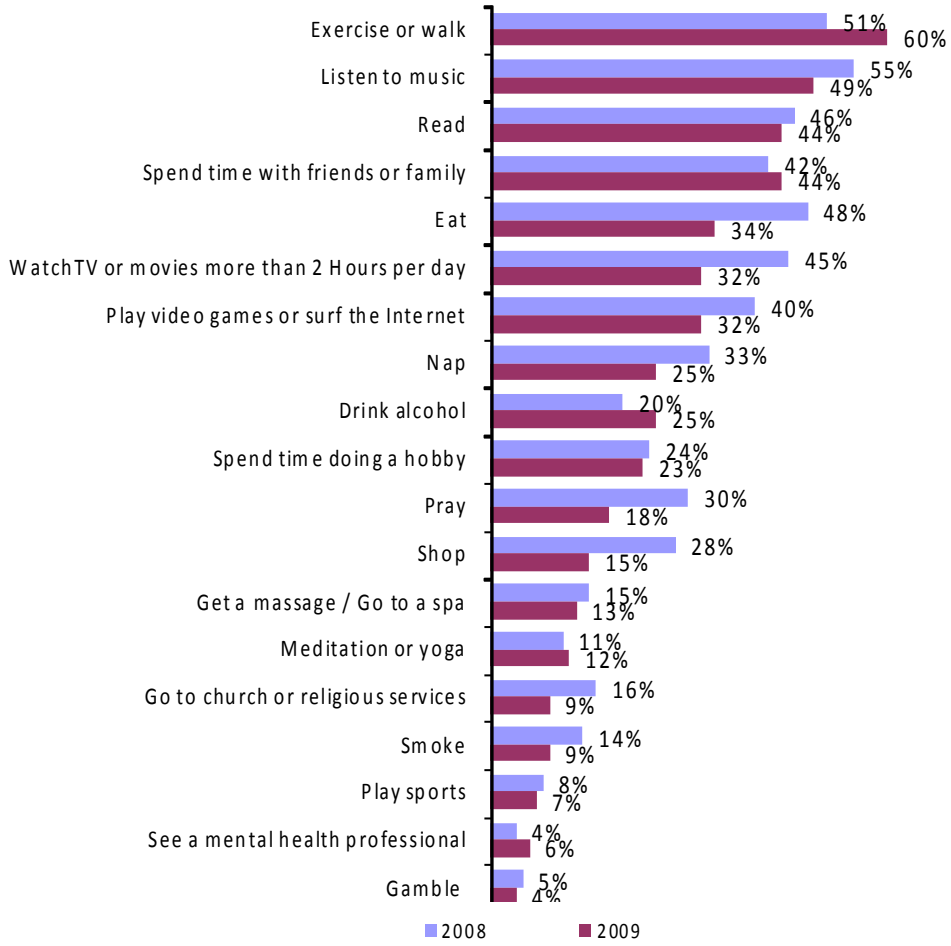


***Managing Stress***

**When it comes to managing their stress, NYC residents are most likely to exercise or walk (60 percent) followed by listening to music (49 percent). These were the top two methods of stress management noted in 2008 as well.**

- This year, New Yorkers are more likely to rely on methods of stress management such as exercising or walking and spending time with family and less likely to say they shop, eat, watch movies and play video games or surf the Internet than they were in 2008. (See Table 4.)

**Table 4: Stress Management**

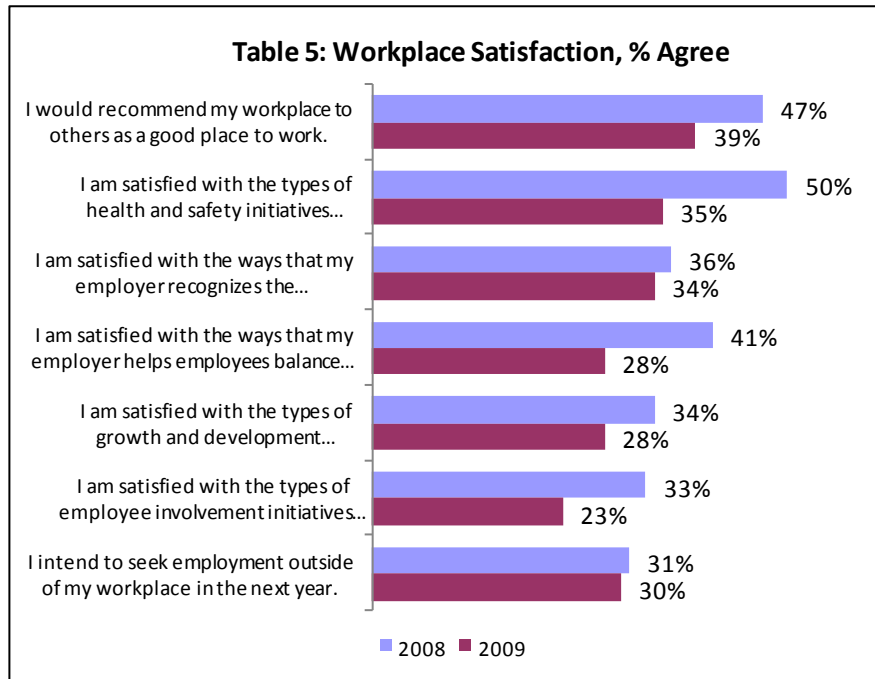


## Stress in the Workplace

### *Workplace Environment*

**In 2009, employed New Yorkers report somewhat less satisfaction with their workplace environment than they did in 2008.**

- While the same percentage of employed New Yorkers (57 percent) agree with the statement, “All in all, I am satisfied with my job” in 2009 as did in 2008, the percentage of New York workers who say they are satisfied with the ways that their employer helps them balance work and non-work responsibilities has decreased from 41 percent to 28 percent in 2009.
- New Yorkers also report less satisfaction with the growth opportunities and development opportunities offered by their employers and are less likely to recommend their workplace to others when compared to 2008. (See Table 5.)
- Nearly half of New Yorkers (47 percent) agree they typically feel tense or stressed out during their workday. This is a slight increase from the 44 percent of NYC residents that reported this last year.



### **Managing Workplace Stress**

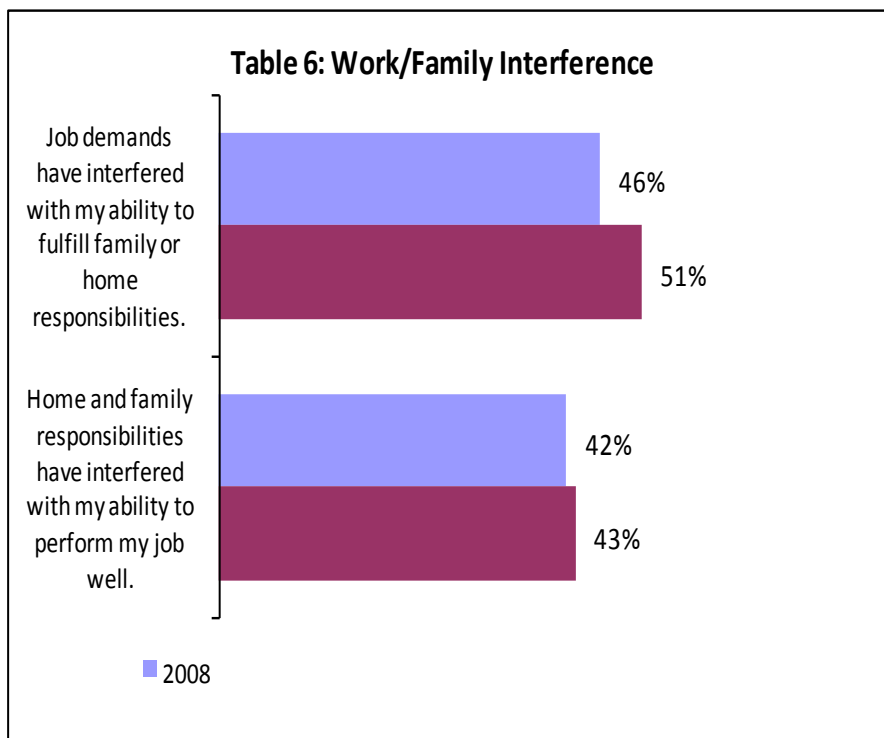
**Compared to 2008, fewer New York workers report missing work due to stress. However, once at work, the same proportion report losing some degree of work productivity because of stress.**

- The percentage of employed New Yorkers reporting they missed at least one day of work due to stress in the past year dropped 10 percentage points since last year’s survey (20 percent vs. 30 percent in 2008).
- The same percentage of New York workers (54 percent) report losing some work productivity due to stress as in 2008.

### **Balancing Work and Family**

**NYC workers continue to struggle with balancing work and family life.**

- In 2008, half (51 percent) of NYC workers report that job demands have interfered with their ability to fulfill family or home responsibilities at some point in the past three months. This is a 5 percentage-point increase from last year’s findings.
- New Yorkers view their home life as less disruptive of their performance at their job with 43 percent of NYC workers agreeing that their home and family life interfered with their ability to perform their job well (compared to a similar proportion, 42 percent, who felt this way in 2008).

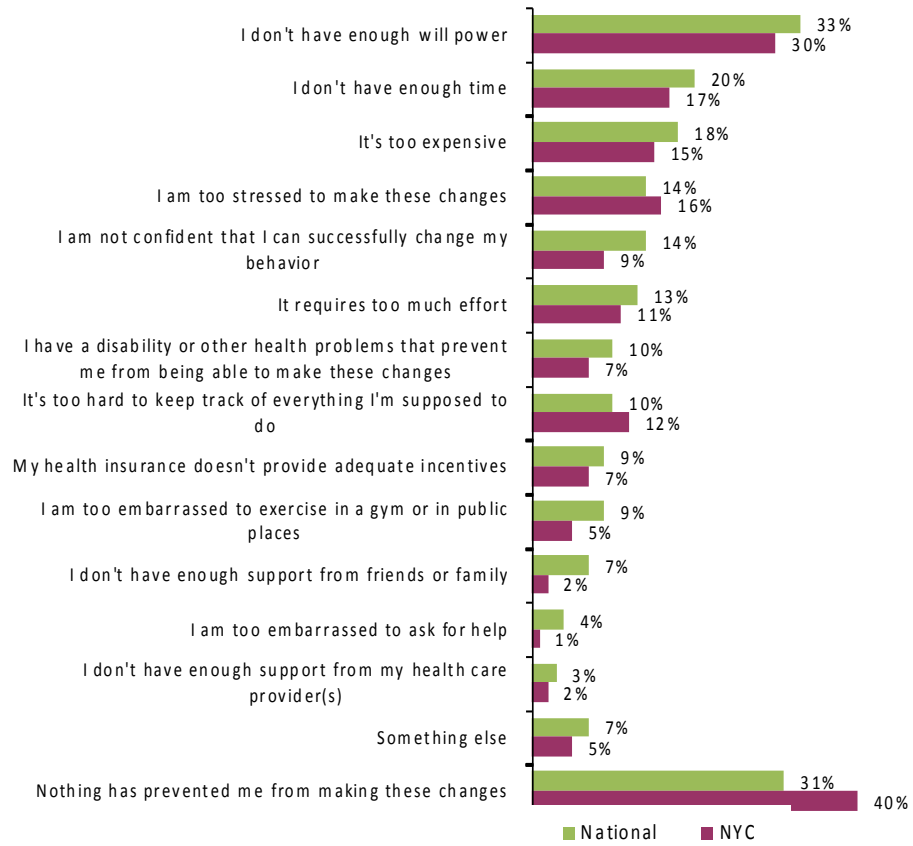


## ***Health Behaviors and Provider Intervention***

**While New Yorkers rate their health relatively high overall, about the same percentage have been told by a provider that they have a chronic condition and have received lifestyle recommendations as adults nationally.**

- Half of New Yorkers (50 percent) view their health as excellent or very good compared to 40 percent of Americans overall.
- While New Yorkers are similarly likely to report that they have been told by a provider that they have a chronic condition as adults nationally (62 percent vs. 66 percent nationally), fewer New Yorkers say they have several conditions, including high blood pressure (21 percent vs. 30 percent nationally), depression (11 percent vs. 17 percent nationally) and chronic pain (6 percent vs. 11 percent nationally).
  - Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers (64 percent) who have been told they have a chronic condition have had a health care provider recommend both prescription medications and lifestyle changes.
- When it comes to lifestyle change recommendations from health providers, most New Yorkers have been advised by a provider to make one or more lifestyle changes (70 percent, the same as the national percentage).
  - More New Yorkers say that over the past five years they have been told to reduce their alcohol consumption when compared to Americans nationally (13 percent vs. 5 percent nationally).
- About half of New Yorkers (51 percent) reported that their health care provider explained the reason for the recommendation and 37 percent said they were offered advice or techniques to help make the changes.
  - Slightly fewer Americans nationally (46 percent) were given an explanation but a similar percentage of respondents (35 percent) were offered advice by their health care provider.
  - Additionally, nearly half of New Yorkers (47 percent) reported that after the recommendation was given, the physician followed up or checked in on their progress. This is consistent with the findings of Americans nationally.
- Over three-quarters of New Yorkers (77 percent) whose health care providers gave them advice on lifestyle changes found the recommendation somewhat or very helpful.
- Nearly a third of New Yorkers (30 percent) say they were prevented from following through with lifestyle change recommendation(s) due to lack of willpower. Similar to the national findings, other top reasons cited for not changing include time, expense or being too stressed to make the changes.
  - While New Yorkers report similar barriers to adults nationally, they are more likely to report that nothing prevented them from making changes (40 percent vs. 31 percent). (See Table 7.)

**Table 7: Barriers to Lifestyle Changes, National vs. NYC**



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