

Eager to reconnect: Canadians most excited to hug friends, eat out, go back to work when COVID-19 threat recedes

Timeline for 'back to normal' continues to lengthen, with most now saying it will be three months or longer

April 13, 2020 – What was likely the quietest Easter long weekend Canadians have known in their lifetimes is giving way to a fifth week of isolation as the country continues to fight the spread of COVID-19.

The latest public opinion survey from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute's continuing research on COVID-19 finds that most Canadians are gearing up for the long haul. Indeed, two-in-five Canadians (41%) say they expect it will be three to six months before things are back to normal in Canada, and another two-in-five (43%) say it will be longer than that.

What this means for the population is evidently more movie and TV streaming and more organized spaces around the house.

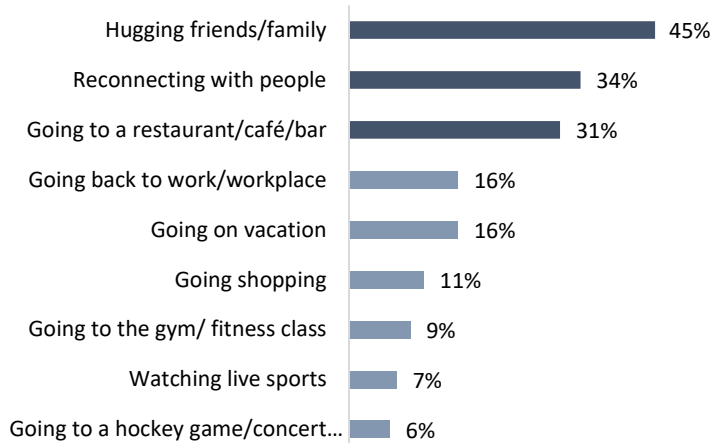
Indeed, asked if there's anything they are doing more of than normal since being isolated, streaming and cleaning are the two top choices, followed by calling friends and family and taking more walks.

If there's one thing Canadians are looking forward to when this outbreak has run its course, it's reconnecting. Nearly half (45%) say they're looking forward to giving someone a big hug while one-in-three (34%) say they can't wait to see and hang out with people outside their households.

More Key Findings:

- Young people, those ages 18 to 34, are vastly more likely to be spending isolation streaming movies and TV shows, four-in-five (78%) are.
- Women are particularly excited to get out and hug their friends or family. More than half of female respondents say this (55%) compared to 33 per cent of men.

**When things get "back to normal", whenever that is, what are you MOST looking forward to doing? Please select up to two:
(All Respondents, n=4,240)**



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey that was fielded in two waves among representative randomized samples of 4,240 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#) between April 1 – 6, 2020, and of 2,129 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#) between April 4-6, 2020. For comparison purposes only, probability samples of these sizes would carry margins of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

- Men, meanwhile, are more likely than women to say they are most looking forward to having a meal out at a restaurant (35% to 27%) or watching live sports

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

INDEX:

- **How are Canadians filling time in isolation?**
- **What are they most looking forward to when this is over?**
- **And when will “normal” begin?**

How are Canadians filling time in isolation?

With unemployment [skyrocketing](#) and public health officials asking residents to stay home to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, many Canadians have been struggling with the anxiety of how to get by in their day to day lives. Millions of employment insurance and Canadian Emergency Response Benefits have [provided some solace](#) for Canadians, while others have been left still [looking for answers](#).

Related: Canadians near-unanimous in expectations of economic woe as pandemic continues

While economic concerns are primary, another reality is facing Canadians during this unprecedented time. Millions of residents are looking at considerable amounts of extra time in their day as they deal with reduced work or unemployment. With this in mind, the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians about this new aspect of their lives. The results illuminate both positive and negative trends.

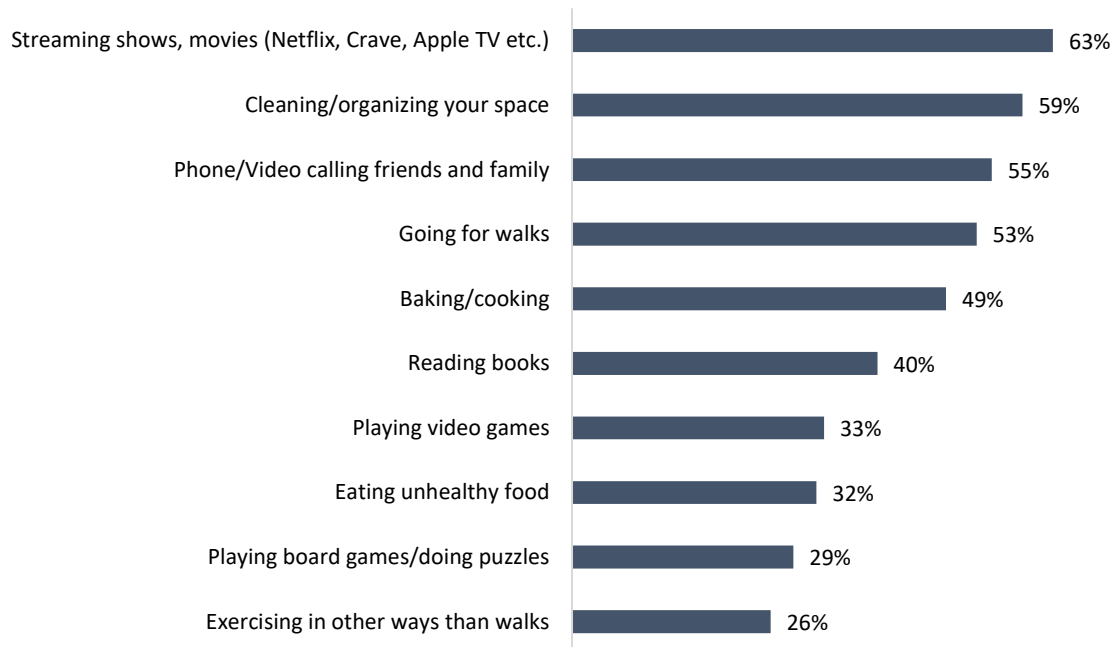
Asked how they are occupying their time, many people report taking up sedentary activities such as streaming movies and television shows (63%), playing video games (33%) and reading (40%).

That said, there are also more people going for walks (53%) or taking up extra exercise (26%) that they may not have previously had time for with their regular schedule intact. Below are the activities that Canadians report doing more than they were, pre-isolation:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Many of us have more free time these days. Is there anything you've been doing more in the last few weeks? (All respondents, n=2,129)



These data include some stark generational differences in terms of activity of choice. Younger Canadians are much more likely to be engaged in video streaming, with nearly four-in-five (78%) reporting doing this, compared to two-thirds of 35- to 54-year-olds (65%) and half of those 55 and over (51%). Each group is close to identical when it comes to spending time cleaning and organizing, as well as reading ([see detailed tables for more demographic breakdowns](#)):

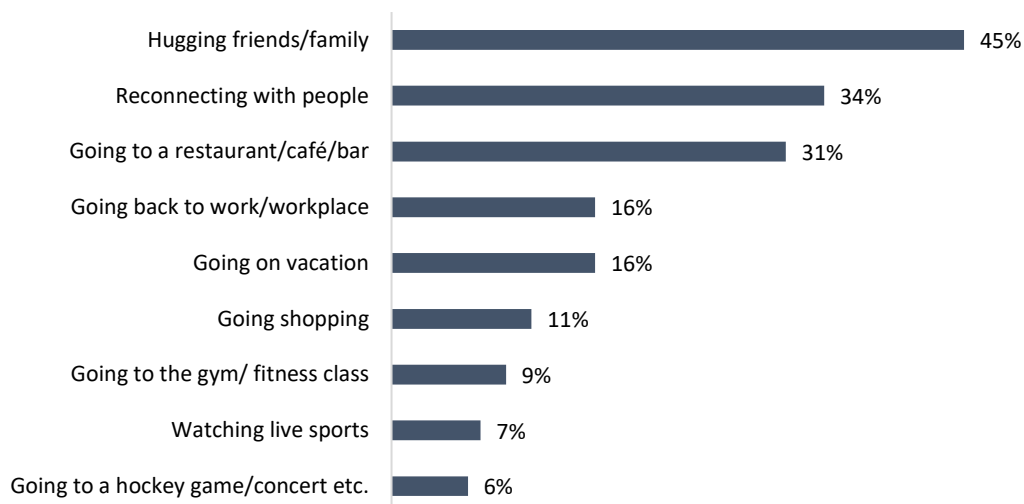
**Many of us have more free time these days. Is there anything you've been doing more in the last few weeks?
(select all that apply)**

	Total (n=2,129)	Age group		
		18-34 (n=605)	35-54 (n=751)	55+ (n=773)
Streaming shows and movies (Netflix, Crave, Apple TV etc.)	63%	78%	65%	51%
Cleaning/organizing your space	59%	58%	59%	60%
Phone/Video calling friends and family	55%	66%	49%	53%
Going for walks	53%	58%	52%	49%
Baking/cooking	49%	56%	51%	43%
Reading books	40%	40%	36%	43%
Playing video games	33%	48%	35%	21%
Eating unhealthy food	32%	44%	34%	19%
Playing board games/doing puzzles	29%	33%	32%	22%
Exercising in other ways than walks	26%	38%	23%	20%

What are they most looking forward to when this is over?

What will emerge from this strange hibernation look like? A lack of physical contact with others is evidently top of mind for Canadians. Nearly half (45%) say that the thing they are looking most forward to is giving a friend or family member a hug. Another one-in-three (34%) say that they are looking forward to reconnecting with their friends or going out to a restaurant or café (31%):

**When things get “back to normal”, whenever that is, what are you MOST looking forward to doing? Please select up to two:
(All Respondents, n=4,240)**



There are considerable differences in priority based on gender. Women are far more likely to say that they look forward to a hug (55% to 33%), and twice as likely to say that they are excited to go shopping (14% to 7%). Meanwhile, men are more likely to say that they look forward to a restaurant trip (35% to 27%) and four times more likely to say they are anticipating watching live sports (11% to 3%):

When things get “back to normal”, whenever that is, what are you MOST looking forward to doing. Please select up to two: (All respondents)			
	Total (n=4,240)	Gender	
		Male (n=2,017)	Female (n=2,205)
Hugging friends/family	45%	33%	55%
Reconnecting with people outside of my household	34%	33%	36%
Going to a restaurant/café/bar	31%	35%	27%
Going back to work/workplace	16%	18%	14%
Going on vacation	16%	17%	14%
Going shopping	11%	7%	14%

CONTACT:

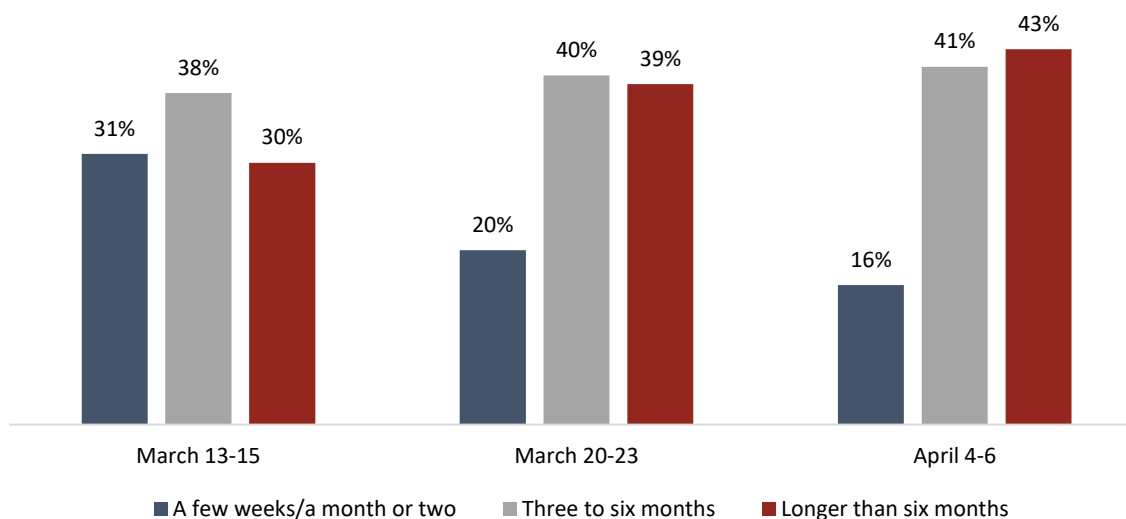
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Going to the gym/a fitness class	9%	10%	8%
Watching live sports	7%	11%	3%
Going to a hockey game/concert etc.	6%	8%	5%

And when will “normal” begin?

As the coronavirus has spread in Canada, the percentage of Canadians saying that it will last less than a couple of months has dropped. That view is now held by just 16 per cent of Canadians, half of what it was in mid-March, while equal numbers now feel it will be three to six months (41%) or longer (43%):

When do you anticipate things will be 'back to normal' in Canada?

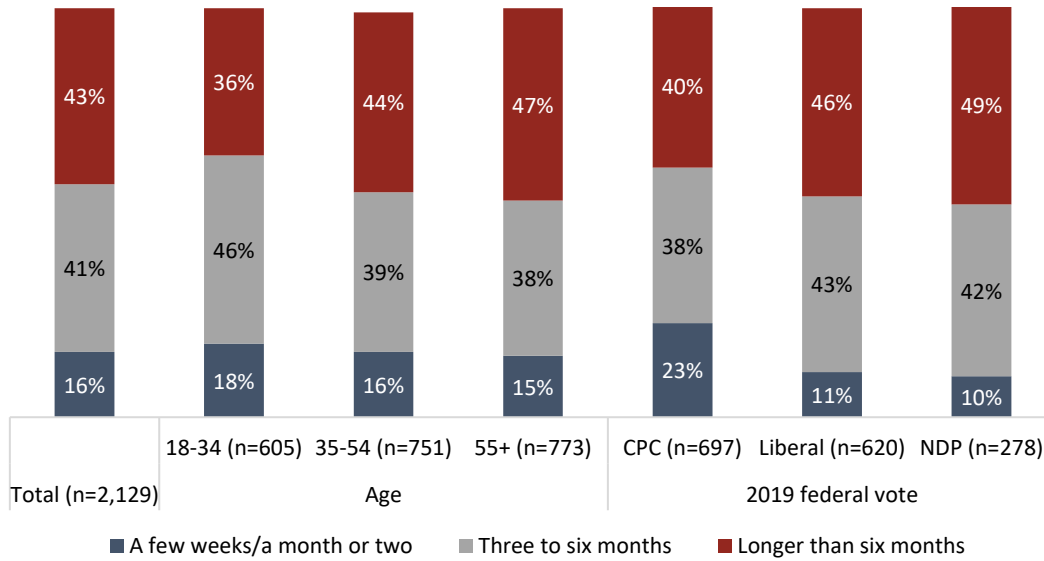


Those most likely to say the timeline will be shorter than longer are past Conservative Party voters. One-quarter of this group say a month or two will be enough to get things back to normal. Generationally, those 55 years of age and over are most likely to foresee a timeline longer than six months:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**When do you anticipate things will be 'back to normal' in Canada?
(All Respondents, n=2,129)**



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).