

# 18

## Time-use



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<b>Which activities take up most of the day?</b>	<b>280</b>
Do women spend their time differently to men?	281
How does life stage affect the way time is used?	281
<b>Does paid work take all our time?</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>How many people work for free</b>	<b>282</b>
How much unpaid work do individuals do?	282
What is the total value of unpaid work to the nation?	283
<b>Who does the work the house?</b>	<b>283</b>
What is the financial value of the domestic work of women?	283
Do men and women do different things at home?	284
Do women do more domestic work even when they work full time?	285
How fair do men and women think the workload is in the home?	287
<b>Do men and women spend the same total time on the combination of paid work, child care and domestic work?</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>Is leisure more time consuming than work?</b>	<b>289</b>
Who reads?	289
Does TV dominate our leisure time?	290
Are men really obsessed with sport?	290
Does anyone have any spare time?	290
<b>Who does voluntary work?</b>	<b>291</b>
How much is voluntary work worth?	291
<b>Do people have any time for their family?</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Does marriage make a difference to time-use?</b>	<b>293</b>
Do women just use time differently when they have a partner?	293
<b>Highlights</b>	<b>295</b>

## List of tables

---

18.1	Time-use classification	280
18.2	Hours per day on various activities by life stage/family type (primary and secondary activities)	282
18.3	Hours per day on employment, 1997 (primary and secondary activity)	282
18.4	Percentage doing unpaid work in previous two days by gender and age (primary or secondary activities)	283
18.5	Value of unpaid work by age and gender, Australia 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	284
18.6	Hours per day on domestic work by family/life stage, gender and workforce participation (primary and secondary activities)	286
18.7	Feelings about fairness of domestic work distribution by gender, couples only, 2001	287
18.8	Congruence of couples views about who does their fair share of the domestic work	287
18.9	Value of volunteer work by age and gender	291
18.10	Percentage of time directed to self, family and non-family members	291
18.11	Percentage of time spent for family and non-family members (excludes personal care and employment)	292
18.12	Gender gap (minutes per day) in time on various activities, lone persons and couple only (female vs male) (primary and secondary activities)	293

## List of figures

---

18.1	Hours spent per day on various activities (primary and secondary activities)	281
18.2	Annual per capita value of domestic unpaid work by age and gender, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	284
18.3	Gender gap in dollar value of types of unpaid domestic work by age, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	285
18.4	Percentage of domestic work on cooking, laundry, cleaning and other housework by gender and age, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	285
18.5	Percentage of domestic work on outside work and household management by gender and age, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	286
18.6	Total hours per day on employment, domestic work and child care by gender and family type, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	288
18.7	Hours per day on recreation and leisure by gender, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)	289
18.8	Minutes per day spent reading by gender by and age (primary and secondary activities)	289
18.9	Hours per day watching TV/videos by gender and age (primary and secondary activities)	290
18.10	Minutes per day spent on sport by gender and family type (primary and secondary activities)	290
18.11	Free time per day by gender and family type	291

# 18 Time-use

Time is one of the valuable but finite resources we have available. The way in which we allocate time can reflect levels and patterns of inequality in much the same way as does the allocation and use of other resources such as money. Increasingly, in recent years time-use studies have been conducted to explore the way in which people use this valuable resource. This chapter explores the way in which contemporary Australian men and women use their time. It concentrates on the ways in which time-use differs between men and women, and how it varies across different family types and at different stages of the life course. In this way we can see the ways in which time-use is allocated differently according to these key family characteristics.

The chapter also examines for whom Australian adults spend their time. To what extent is time-use directed towards other family members? Do Australians spend most of their time doing things for people at home or outside the home? How much time do people spend doing things for people beyond their family?

A further aspect of time-use in Australian society is the shortage of time. Many families consist of two people who are employed and trying to combine their employment commitments with child rearing and other responsibilities. How do these families manage with their time? How stressed are they? The growth of lone parent families represents another group of families where time is likely to be at a premium – where one parent has to do many of the

household tasks that are shared in two parent families. How time stressed are lone parent families?

## Which activities take up most of the day?

The 1997 Australian Time Use Survey classified people's time-use into nine broad categories. In most of this chapter these broad categories are used. Table 18.1 briefly describes each of these time-use categories.

Time-use is classified into time devoted to primary activities and to secondary activities. Primary activities are the main activity in which the person is engaged at a particular point of time. Secondary activities are other activities that were being undertaken at the same time as the main activity. An example of the two time-uses is where a parent is preparing a meal (primary activity) but is also keeping their eye on their children (secondary activity) at the same time (ABS 1998d).

Since personal care includes sleeping and eating, dressing and personal hygiene it is hardly surprising that it takes more time in the day than any other type of activity – 11.2 hours per day on average. The next most time consuming activity after personal care is recreation and leisure – this takes up about 8.3 hours per day as a primary activity. Paid work takes up 3.4 hours per day as a primary activity. This appears to be a low figure but it must be remembered that this is an average that includes all those with no paid work and includes weekends and holidays.

**Table 18.1** Time-use classification

Time-use category	Types of activities
Personal Care	Sleeping and rest, personal hygiene, health care, eating and drinking
Employment related	Working in paid jobs, looking for work, travel to and from work
Education	Attending education courses, homework, job related training, travel to and from education
Domestic activities	Food and drink preparation and clean up, laundry and clothes care, cleaning, other housework, pet care, gardening, home maintenance, household management (paperwork, bills, budgeting, rubbish removal etc)
Child care	Physical and emotional care of children, teaching and disciplining, playing, reading, talking, child minding, travel and communication related to children
Purchasing	Purchasing goods and services and the associated travel and communication
Voluntary work	Caring for the emotional and physical needs of adults, helping others and doing favours, unpaid voluntary work and the associated travel and communication [cooking and housework for other people is not included in voluntary work but as domestic work]
Social and community interaction	Socialising, visiting cultural and entertainment venues, attending sporting event, religious activities, community participation
Recreation and leisure	Sport and outdoor activities, games, hobbies, arts and crafts, reading, watching TV, listening to music, radio etc, using internet, attendance at recreational courses, free time and the associated communication and travel

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998d).

Domestic work and child care are the next most time consuming activities taking up an average of 2.5 hours per day as a primary activity – across the whole population. Child care takes an average of two hours per day (averaged across all people, not just those with young children). Social and community participation and buying things – each take 48 minutes per day. Education (25 minutes) and voluntary work (12 minutes) take up relatively little of our time overall.

These global averages hide a great deal of variation. Not only does the time spent on different activities vary according to gender (for example, paid work, domestic activities and child care), many activities are very time consuming at certain points of the life course and not at other points (for example, child care, education). Other activities are more time consuming in some types of families than in others (for example, child care, domestic work). These differences are explored throughout this chapter.

### Do women spend their time differently to men?

Time-usage has been used as an indication of the extent to which our society and households are gendered. Since time is a resource and different activities are differentially valued, gender differences in time-use have frequently been used as an indication of gender inequality. Even where time-use does not reflect inequality, gender differences in time-use can reflect the extent to which various types of activities reflect a gendered division of labour.

Figure 18.1 reports the average number of hours per day that men and women spend on each of the nine types of activity as the primary activity.

At a general level, gender differences are most evident in the amount of time spent in paid work (2.4 hours across all women and 4.6 hours across all men); domestic work (3.3 hours for women and 1.7 for men); child care (2.0 for women and 0.7 for

men) and purchasing (1.0 hour for women and 0.6 hours for men). When examined across all people aged 15 and older, men and women spend a reasonably similar amount of time on education, voluntary work, social and community participation and on recreational and leisure activities.

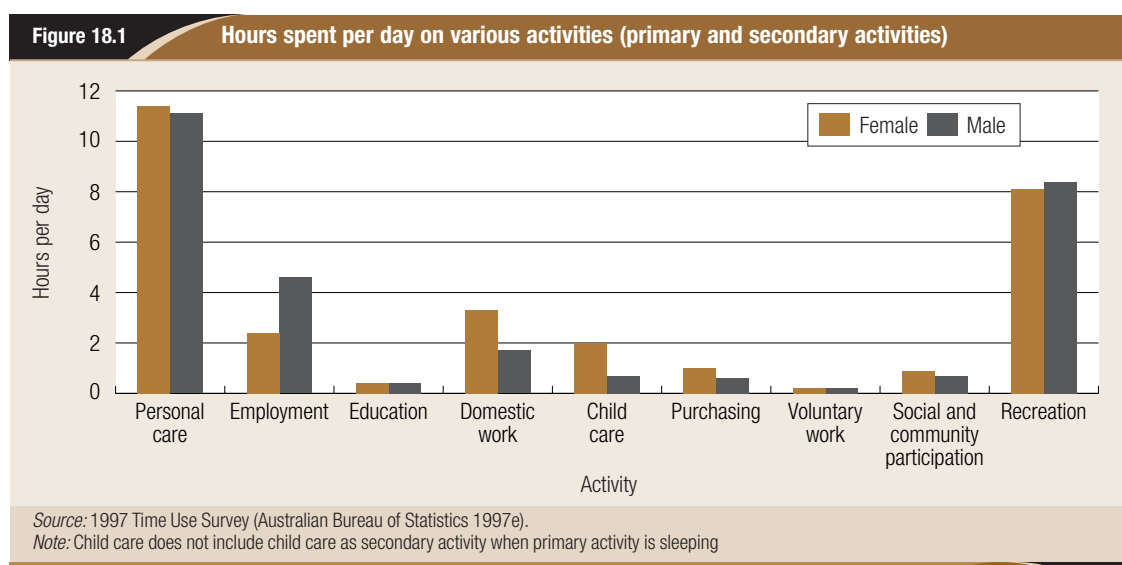
### How does life stage affect the way time is used?

The time spent on different activities varies considerably according to a person's stage in life and their family circumstances. In the analysis below the total time spent on activities, regardless of whether the activity was a primary or secondary activity, is reported.

It will come as little surprise that Table 18.2 shows that young people aged under 35 spent the most time, on average, in paid work while lone parents with dependent children and people aged over 65 spent the least time. Nor is it surprising that lone people aged under 35 and parents with dependent children spent more time on education than other people.

Domestic work was most time consuming for older people – those aged over 65 spent about 3.5 hours per day on domestic work followed by couple only households. This higher level of domestic work in such households probably reflects the absence of as many competing demands such as demands stemming from education, children and employment.

The time spent on purchasing, voluntary work and on social and community activities as a primary activity is fairly constant across the different family and household types in Table 18.2. The amount of time spent on leisure and recreation is also reasonably even across the life stage groups. However, those aged over 65 spent more time engaged in these activities than any other group – no doubt due to fewer competing demands from child care, employment, and education.



### Does paid work take all our time?

While the average time per day spent on paid work is just 3.4 hours, this varies widely according to age, gender and stage in the life course.

Young men and women living with a partner but without children spent the most time on paid work. Including weekends and holidays, these childless partnered young men worked 6.3 hours per day and comparable women worked 5.1 hours a day. If those who did not have any paid work at all were excluded these figures would be higher (Table 18.3).

Partnered men with non dependent children and those aged 35-64 and without children spent less time on paid work than those with younger children. This is partly because of a higher proportion of men in this age group who had retired or worked part time.

As children grow older, mothers increased the time they devoted to paid work to about three hours per day – a considerable increase from the 2.2 hours among women with dependent children. Among women, being a lone mother or a couple mother made no difference to the average amount of time devoted to paid work (Table 18.3).

### How many people work for free?

Although the amount that people are paid for their work is widely regarded as a measure of success and of the value of the work, a great deal of work in our society remains unpaid. A large proportion of this unpaid work is undertaken by women and older people and this time is frequently taken for granted and not regarded as “real” work.

However, if it was not for the unpaid work of many people, the same activities would have to be paid for or would not be undertaken – often at considerable social cost (for example, child care, voluntary work, caring for people with disabilities). It is therefore instructive to see how much time people spend on unpaid work and to estimate the dollar value of this work.

### How much unpaid work do individuals do?

Table 18.4 reports how many people did unpaid work during the two days for which they reported their time-use patterns in the 1997 Time Use Survey. While nearly all men and women did *some* unpaid work within their own household, over these two days far fewer did unpaid work for people outside their household. In all age groups more women than men undertook unpaid work for people outside their household – for those under the age of 64 this gender difference was large with far more women than men undertaking this type of unpaid work.

Care must be taken in interpreting these percentage figures. Since they only record activities over a two

**Table 18.3** Hours per day on employment, 1997 (primary and secondary activity)

	Female (Hours)	Male (Hours)
Couple only <35	5.1	6.3
Lone person <35	4.3	5.5
Couple dependent children	2.2	5.5
Lone parent ,dependent children	2.2	na
Couple only 35-64	2.1	4.7
Couple non dependent children only	2.9	4.7
Lone parent non dependent children only	3.1	5.1
Couple only >64	0.1	0.4
Lone person >64	0.1	0.4

*Source:* 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).  
*Note:* These figures are average hours per day across the whole sample and therefore include those whose time-use records applied to weekends, holidays and those not employed  
*na:* too few cases for reliable estimates

**Table 18.2** Hours per day on various activities by life stage/family type (primary and secondary activities)

	Couple only <35	Lone person <35	Couple, dependent children	Lone parent, dependent children	Couple only 35-64	Couple, non dependent children only	Lone parent non dependent children only	Couple only >64	Lone person >64
Personal care	11.3	11.2	10.9	11.3	11.4	11.4	11.6	12.1	11.7
Employment	5.6	5.0	3.8	2.1	3.3	3.9	3.9	0.3	0.2
Education	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Domestic work	1.7	1.4	2.5	2.7	3.1	2.4	2.4	3.4	3.5
Child care	0.08	0.1	2.9	3.1	0.27	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.17
Purchasing	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9
Voluntary work	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Social and community	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8
Recreation	8.7	8.6	7.5	7.5	8.6	8.8	8.2	9.5	9.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>29.2</i>	<i>28.8</i>	<i>29.9</i>	<i>29.7</i>	<i>28.5</i>	<i>28.6</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>27.3</i>	<i>27.5</i>

*Source:* 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).  
*Note:* Since time-use includes both primary and secondary activities the total time per day can sum to more than 24 hours  
 Child care time excludes child care as a secondary activity when the primary activity was sleeping

day period they will underestimate the percentage who *ever* undertake these activities. Nevertheless, at an overall level, these percentages provide a useful indication of the relative frequency with which adults engage in these types of activities.

However, the percentage of people undertaking some unpaid work gives little sense of the *amount* of unpaid work or its economic worth. Table 18.5 converts the amount of time spent on unpaid work into the dollar value of this work (see de Vaus, Gray and Stanton 2003 for the methodology). This shows that in each age group the dollar value of the unpaid work of women is substantial and is higher than that of men. The higher per capita value of the unpaid work of women is particularly marked in the main child rearing years when women are aged 25-44. In these years the average value of the unpaid work of all women in this age group was \$45,917 per year in 1997.

#### What is the total value of unpaid work to the nation?

When the value of the unpaid work of individuals is generalised to the population it can be seen that the total value of unpaid work is considerable. In 1997 women performed unpaid work valued at \$225 billion while men did \$111 billion of unpaid work<sup>1</sup>.

While the child rearing years are the period when men and women undertake the most unpaid work, these figures also show the considerable contribution of older people through their unpaid work. Women aged 65 and over did over \$34 billion worth of unpaid work in 1997 and older men did over \$15 billion worth of unpaid work in 1997.<sup>2</sup>

#### Who does the work around the house?

Most domestic work in households is unpaid (see p. 270-71). In a society in which the worth of work is frequently measured in terms of the amount of income it attracts, there is a massive undervaluing of the contribution of those who contribute through their unpaid domestic labour. This section, rather than reporting the time spent on various domestic activities, reports the financial value of the time spent on unpaid domestic work. The figures below are based on a pay rate of \$12.15 per hour – the standard rate for domestic labour in 1997.

#### What is the financial value of the domestic work of women?

Nationally, in 1997, women undertook unpaid domestic work to the value of \$130.13 billion per annum. Men undertook unpaid domestic work to the value of \$70.77 billion per annum<sup>3</sup>.

Figure 18.2 reports per capita the dollar value of the unpaid domestic work of women and men over a year. It shows that in 1997 in each age group, women undertook more domestic work than did men and the value of this work by women per year was correspondingly higher (Figure 18.2). Among women, the value of their unpaid domestic work peaked among those aged 55-64 where the annual per capita value of unpaid domestic work in 1997 dollars was \$18,762. The value then declined slightly among older women but remained substantial at \$16,017 per year per woman among women age 75 and over.

Among men and women aged 15 to 64, women did about twice the amount of domestic work than men did. After the age of 64 the gap in the value of the domestic work of men and women narrows

**Table 18.4** Percentage doing unpaid work in previous two days by gender and age (primary or secondary activities) 1997

	Age group					
	15-24 %	25-44 %	45-54 %	55-64 %	65-74 %	75+ %
<b>Females</b>						
Own household	96.0	98.9	99.5	98.4	99.4	96.2
For people outside own household	41.2	49.5	52.0	51.8	41.7	31.6
Family outside own household	10.8	13.9	18.9	27.2	18.5	14.4
Non family outside household	34.9	42.4	41.8	34.8	32.0	20.9
<b>Males</b>						
Own household	83.8	93.5	94.4	96.0	99.2	99.2
Outside own household	28.7	32.7	30.8	37.4	34.9	28.2
Family outside own household	3.8	8.0	9.2	12.9	12.9	7.8
Non family outside household	26.0	28.0	23.7	28.7	28.1	22.0

Source: 1997 Australian Time-use Survey (de Vaus, Gray and Stanton 2003).

Notes: The sum of family outside own household and non family outside household is greater than for people outside own household given that people can do both types of outside own household

Unpaid work is defined as Food & drink preparation & clean up; Laundry, ironing & clothes care; Other housework; Gardening & lawn care, cleaning grounds etc; Home maintenance; Household management, associated communication & travel; Child-care, associated communication & travel; Purchasing, associated communication & travel; Adult personal care; Volunteer work, associated communication & travel. See: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), (2000j), *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy 1997*, ABS Catalogue No. 5240.0, ABS, Canberra

**Table 18.5** Value of unpaid work by age and gender, Australia 1997 (primary and secondary activities)

Age	Female		Male	
	Per capita	Population (\$'000)	Per capita	Population (\$'000)
	\$ per annum		\$ per annum	
15-24	13,990	17,495,225	6,088	7,989,511
25-44	45,917	129,989,730	19,788	55,023,270
45-54	27,812	32,432,272	16,255	18,937,288
55-64	26,828	21,624,138	16,741	14,247,534
65-74	24,192	16,109,310	18,357	10,307,197
75 +	19,932	7,530,766	17,636	4,799,695

Source: 1997 Australian Time-use Survey (de Vaus, Gray and Stanton 2003).

substantially but women continued to do more domestic work.

The dollar value of the unpaid domestic work of men was considerably less than that of women. For men up to age 64 the value of male domestic labour was approximately half that of similar aged women. However, the value of the unpaid domestic work of men increased the older a man was and continued to grow so that the value of the domestic work of men aged 75 and over was the highest of all male age cohorts – these men contributed an average of \$13,735 per man in unpaid domestic work in 1997.

The different patterns of domestic labour of men and women as they grow older results in a narrowing of the gender gap in the time devoted to (and therefore the dollar value of) domestic work. This narrowing is especially noticeable in the age groups over 65 where the gender gap rapidly narrows. Among those aged 55-64, women on average, did almost \$8,000 more worth of domestic work per woman than similarly aged men; women aged 65-74 did \$4,750 more than comparable men, while women aged 75 and over did just under \$2,300

more worth of domestic work each year than comparable men (Figure 18.2).

Among these age groups, the oldest men, aged 75 and over, increased their domestic contributions by gardening more, spending more time on house maintenance (they did \$1,500 more of such work each year than did 55-65 year olds) by doing more meal preparation (\$1,000 more a year) and a little more laundry. On the other hand, the oldest women (75+) reduced their cooking contributions by about \$1,000 per annum, did \$1,200 less laundry work and \$500 less outside domestic work than did 55-64 year old women (Figure 18.3).

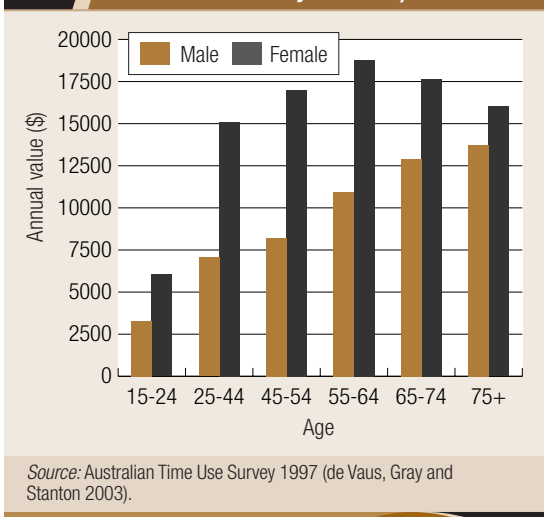
The narrowing of the gap in domestic labour in later life most probably reflects the impact of retirement on men. As they retire their contribution to domestic work increased and this enabled their wives to do less. These patterns also challenge the notion that today's younger men and women are sharing domestic work equally (those aged 25 to 44). The gender gaps in domestic contributions of younger men and women were certainly greater than among the older age cohorts.

#### *Do men and women do different things at home?*

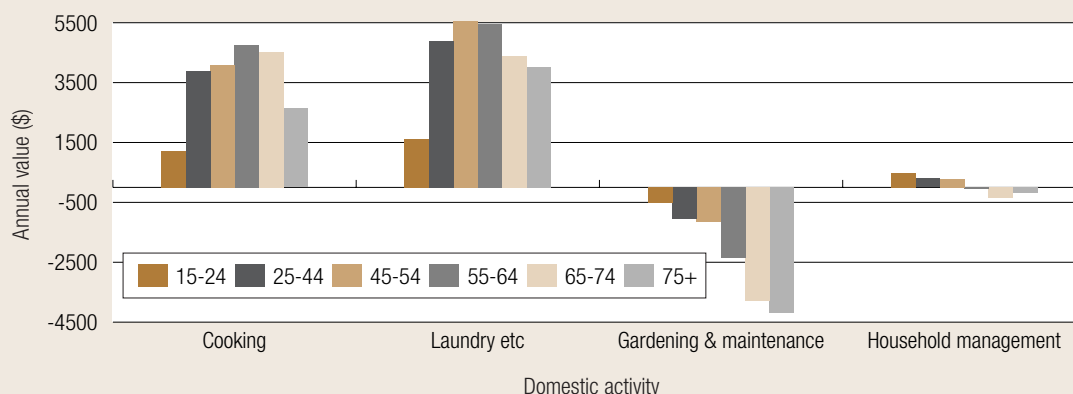
While there is a substantial gender gap in the amount and value of unpaid domestic work performed by men and women, the gender differences in domestic work are even greater when particular types of domestic work are examined. Even though men spend less time on domestic work than women, does the domestic work they undertake differ from that which women perform?

Overall men spent a much larger *proportion* of their domestic workload on outside work and household management while women spent a much larger proportion on inside housework, laundry and cooking (Figure 18.4).

Household management and outside work made up a much larger share of the domestic workload of men (45 per cent of total domestic time) than of women (13 per cent of domestic load). On the other hand, cooking, cleaning up, laundry, cleaning and other inside housework made up 78 per cent of the domestic work of women compared to

**Figure 18.2** Annual per capita value of domestic unpaid work by age and gender, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)

**Figure 18.3** Gender gap in dollar value of types of unpaid domestic work by age, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)



Source: 1997 Australian Time-use Survey (de Vaus, Gray and Stanton 2003). Positive values mean women do more than men, negative values mean men do more than women

41 per cent of that of men. In other words, not only did women spend much more time than men on domestic work, they spent that time very differently to that which men did.

Inside housework and cooking took up a similar share of the domestic load of women fairly much regardless of their age (Figure 18.4). Similarly, inside domestic work played a much smaller part of the domestic load of men than of women across all age groups. However, inside domestic work took up a larger proportion of the domestic load of younger men (close to half) but this declined to just above a third of the domestic load of men in their mid fifties to mid seventies. It is not clear whether these differences between younger and older men reflect changes that take place as men age or whether they reflect a different pattern among today's younger men.

Outside work and household management occupied a much larger share of a man's domestic workload than they did for women across all age groups (Figure 18.5). Older men (aged 45 and over)

devoted a larger share of their domestic work to outside and home management tasks (about half their domestic workload) than did younger men where these tasks occupied about 40 per cent of their domestic workload. Across all age groups women devoted far less of their domestic time to outside tasks and household management.

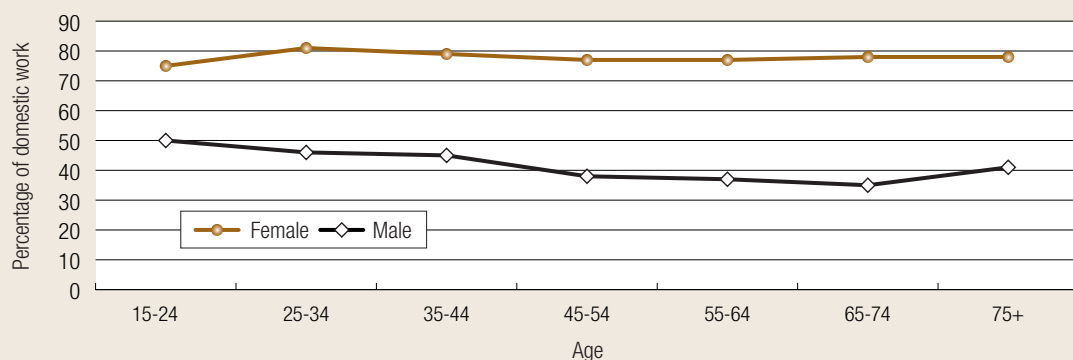
**Do women do more domestic work even when they work full time?**

The amount of domestic work that is undertaken will be affected by the amount of work to be done, the time available to do it, the availability of other people to help and the inclination to do domestic work.

One reason why women spend more time on domestic work is likely to be that they are less likely to be in the full time labour force. Certainly, women who were employed full time did less domestic work (2.3 hours daily) than part timers (3.3 hours daily) and those not in the paid labour force (3.9 hours daily).

However this is not a sufficient explanation for gender differences in the amount of domestic work

**Figure 18.4** Percentage of domestic work on cooking, laundry, cleaning and other housework by gender and age, 1997 (primary and secondary activities)



Source: 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).

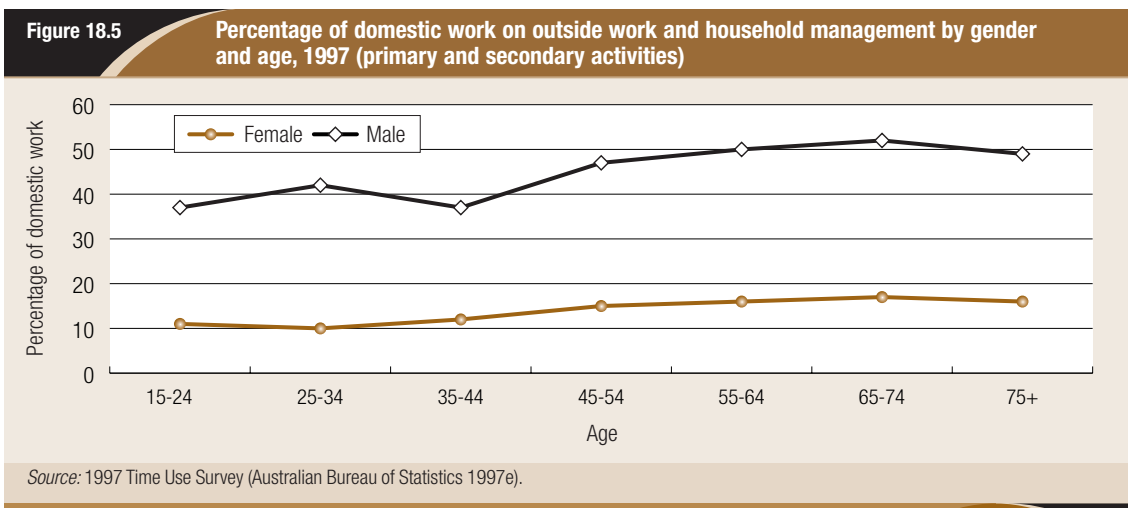
undertaken. Women did considerably more domestic work than men even when they had similar levels of workforce participation<sup>4</sup>. This is clearly seen in Table 18.6 which shows that, among men and women who worked full time, women still did considerably more domestic work each day – women working full time did 2.3 hours domestic work per day compared to comparable men who did 1.4 hours domestic work per day. Similarly, women working part time did 3.3 hours of housework each day compared to part time employed men who did 1.4 hours of domestic work a day. Women not in the labour force did 3.9 hours of domestic work each day compared to 2.5 hours by not employed men.

The gender gap in domestic work extends across the various family types and life stages. For example, among full time workers, young partnered women without children did 1.9 hours a day compared to young partnered men who did 1.2 hours daily. Full time employed, partnered women with dependent children undertook 2.7 hours domestic work a day compared to full time employed, partnered men with dependent children who did 1.5 hours daily (Table 18.6).

The same pattern applied among part time workers and those not in the labour force. For example, of part time workers, partnered women with dependent children undertook 3.3 hours of domestic work daily compared with comparable men who did 1.3 hours per day. Lone mothers not in the labour force who had dependent children did 3.6 hours of domestic work a day compared to lone fathers with dependent children who did one hour a day.

While gender differences in the amount of domestic work undertaken persist, even when men and women have similar types of workforce participation, working, nevertheless has some impact. The gender differences in domestic labour were smallest between men and women who worked full time. While full time employed women did 0.9 hours more domestic work a day than full time employed men this was a smaller gap than between other men/women comparisons. For example:

- Part time employed women did 1.9 hours a day more domestic work than full time employed men and one hour a day more than full time employed women.



**Table 18.6** Hours per day on domestic work by family/life stage, gender and workforce participation (primary and secondary activities)

Hours: domestic	Employed full time		Employed part time		Not employed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Couple only <35	1.2	1.9		2.2	1.0	
Lone person <35	1.0	1.5	1.4		1.8	2.2
Couple dependent children	1.5	2.7	1.3	3.3	1.6	3.8
Lone parent, dependent children		2.4		3.0	1.0	3.6
Couple only 35-64	1.8	2.6		4.0	2.8	4.6
Couple non dependent children only	1.1	2.2		3.9	2.7	4.4
Lone parent non dependent children only	1.0	1.8			3.1	4.0
Couple only >64					3.0	4.2
Lone person >64					3.4	3.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>3.9</i>

Source: 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).  
Blanks= too few cases

- Not employed women did 2.5 hours a day more domestic work than full time employed men, 1.3 hours more than full time employed women and 35 minutes a day more than part time employed women.

**How fair do men and women think the workload is in the home?**

Gender differences in the domestic division of labour have been used widely to indicate the degree of gender equality in households. It has been argued that equality in the amount of time spent by men and women on domestic tasks is one indicator of domestic equality in homes.

Equating the amount of time on a particular type of task with equality in a relationship is a potentially misleading approach since it often ignores what other activities each individual is contributing to the household. More recently, researchers have gone beyond simply comparing the amount of time men and women spend on particular tasks to exploring their perceptions of the fairness and feelings of satisfaction with the domestic division of labour (Lennon and Rosenfield 1994; Thompson 1991; DeMaris and Longmore 1996; Dempsey 1997; Baxter and Western 1996).

Couples do not, by any means, equate equal time distribution with the fairness of the arrangements. Nor is satisfaction dependent on an equal division of domestic labour. Both Australian and overseas studies indicate that around three quarters of women are satisfied with a very uneven division of domestic labour and regard an unequal distribution as being fair (Baxter and Western 1997; Dempsey 1997).

In the 2001 wave of the HILDA survey, partnered men estimated, on average, that they did 25.5 hours per week on domestic and child care tasks while partnered women estimated that they did 44.4 hours per week on the same tasks.

The HILDA survey collected information from both partners in households that contained a couple. This information enables an examination of how much time each partner spent on domestic work and how fair both partners in a couple thought the domestic division of labour was. It is also possible to see to what extent *his* perceptions about the fairness of the division of labour match with *her* perceptions of its fairness.

Who did the most domestic work? The analysis indicated that:

- In three quarters of couples she did more domestic work each week than he did.
- On average, couples estimated that the she did 15.1 hours of domestic and child care per week more than did he did.

This difference says nothing, in itself, about the perceived fairness of these differences. Table 18.7, however, provides direct evidence about the different perceptions of male and female partners regarding the different amount of time spent on domestic work. This table shows that:

- Partnered women were much more likely to think that they did more than their fair share (56.2 per cent). Only 4.1 per cent thought that they did less than their fair share.
- While over half the women thought that they did more than their fair share, only 23.2 per cent of men thought they (that is, men) did less than their fair share.
- 60 per cent of men thought they (that is men) did their fair share while just 40 per cent of the women partners thought that things were shared fairly.

How often do both partners agree that they both do their fair share? In just 29 per cent of couples in the HILDA survey did both partners agree that they did their fair share of the domestic work. In the other 71 per cent they either disagreed about who did their fair share or agreed that one person did more than was fair.

Table 18.8 shows the extent to which female partners share their male partner's view about whether he did his fair share of work around the home. It shows that in couples where the male partner felt

**Table 18.7** Feelings about fairness of domestic work distribution by gender, couples only, 2001

	Males %	Females %
I do <i>much more</i> than my fair share	6.7	32.0
I do a <i>bit more</i> than my fair share	9.8	24.2
I do my fair share	60.2	39.8
I do a <i>bit less</i> than my fair share	18.5	2.7
I do <i>much less</i> than my fair share	4.7	1.4
<i>N</i>	3850	4226

Source: HILDA, 2001 FaCS (2002a).

**Table 18.8** Congruence of couples views about who does their fair share of the domestic work

	He says		
	I do <i>more</i> than my fair share %	I do my fair share %	I do <i>less</i> than my fair share %
<b>She says</b>			
I do <i>more</i> than my fair share	44.8	49.1	79.1
I do my fair share	41.5	48.1	20.0
I do <i>less</i> than my fair share	13.7	2.8	0.9
<i>N</i>	614	2291	886

Source: HILDA, 2001 FaCS (2002a).

he did his fair share, only half their female partners agreed. The other half of the female partners said that they (that is, she) did more than her fair share which, by implication means they thought he did less than his fair share (Table 18.8).

When a male thought he was doing *more* than his fair share, his female partner thought that she was doing more than her fair share in 45 per cent of cases. By implication this means that when he thinks he's doing *more* than his fair share, she thinks he is doing *less* than his fair share. She only agrees that he is doing much more than his fair share in 6.9 per cent of cases (Table 18.8).

Clearly, in the typical couple, the male and female partner have different views as to what constitutes a fair share of the domestic work. Where the male partner thinks he's doing his fair share, his female partner frequently thinks that he is doing less than his fair share.

So, in the typical couple, what does *he* think is a fair share and what does *she* think is a fair share? We can get some insight into this by looking at the reported differences in hours of domestic work in particular circumstances.

- Men who think they do *much more* than their fair share typically spend about 1.2 hours *more* on domestic work than their female partner.
- Women who feel they do much more than their fair share typically report doing 25.7 hours more domestic work per week than their male partner.
- Men who report doing their fair share typically do 13.6 hours *less* domestic work per week than their female partner.
- Women who feel that they do their fair share report doing 10.6 hours more domestic work per week than their male partner.

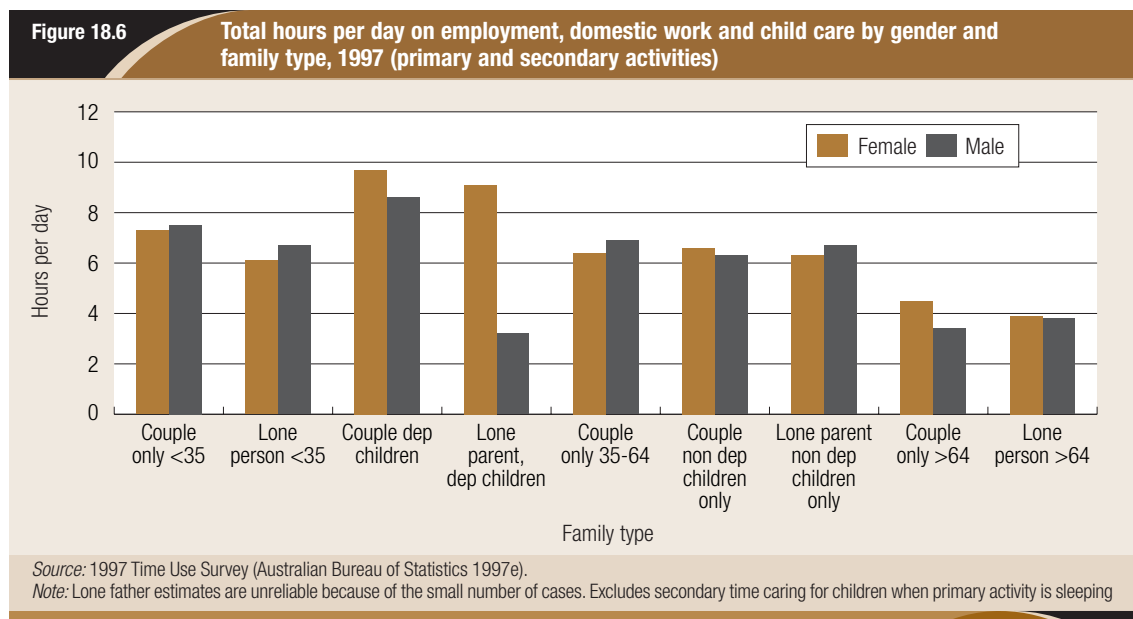
It would appear therefore that the typical couple is one in which they would regard it as fair for the female partner to do between 10.6 and 13.6 hours more domestic and child care work each week than the male partner does. Part of the reason why couples regard this difference in domestic work as fair may be that in judgments about fairness they are including time spent on other activities such as paid employment.

**Do men and women spend the same total time on the combination of paid work, child care and domestic work?**

We have seen gender differences in the amount of time spent on paid employment, domestic work and child care. These different types of activities have been explored separately. But in many cases, separating these types of activities may be artificial and in many households the division of labour between men and women will be sorted out as part of a fuller package of time-use. Part of the “deal” in many households will be that one partner (usually the woman) will spend more time on domestic and child care work while the other partner (usually the man) will spend more time on paid employment.

Do gender differences persist at different points of the life course when the “package” of paid employment, domestic work and child care are considered together? The short answer is yes, but the extent varies widely depending on the life course/family stage (Figure 18.6).

According to the 1997 Time Use Survey, women spent 7.8 hours a day on paid work, domestic work and child care while men spent 7.1 hours on these activities. The time consumed by this set of activities was greatest among those in couple families with dependent children. Partnered women with



dependent children spent 9.7 hours per day on the employment/home/child package while men in these family types spent 8.6 hours on these activities – one hour a day less than the mothers (Figure 18.6).

Lone mothers with dependent children had the next heaviest time commitment to work, home and children spending an average of 9.1 hours a day on these activities.

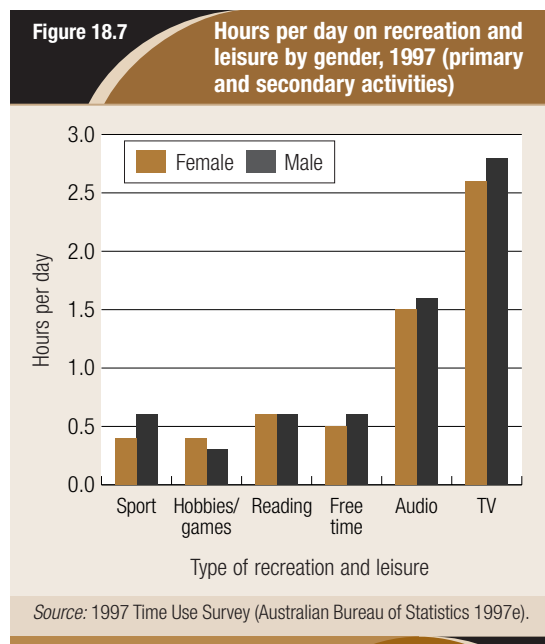
Families with dependent children clearly had the heaviest combined load of employment, child care and domestic work and this load was heavier among women. Men and women in households in which there were no children or no dependent children, all devoted a similar amount of time to the work/home/child package – between six to seven hours per day on average. Older men and women, regardless of whether they were partnered or alone, devoted the least amount of time to employment, domestic work and child care.

### Is leisure more time consuming than work?

While adults spent an average of 8.3 hours a day on recreation and leisure, some leisure activities are far more common than others. In 1997, the average person in Australia spent:

- 2.7 hours per day watching TV or videos.
- 1.5 hours per day listening to music and radio.
- 35 minutes a day reading (including newspapers).
- Half an hour per day playing sport.
- 25 minutes daily on hobbies, games, arts and craft.
- 35 minutes per day of free time.

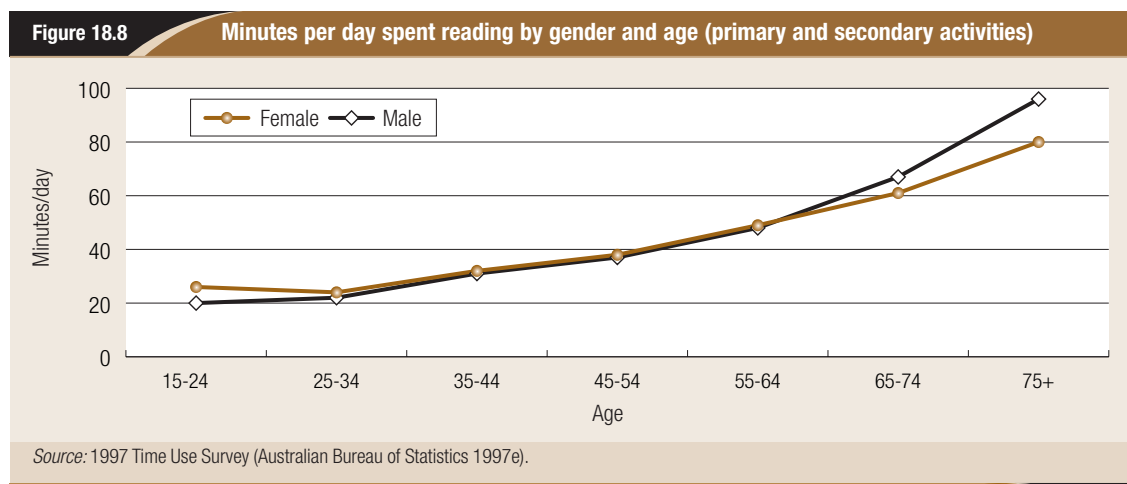
With the exception of sport, men and women spent their leisure time in very similar ways – men spent slightly more time per day on each type of activity but the basic time distribution across the different recreational activities was very similar for both men and women (Figure 18.7).



### Who reads?

In the 1997 Time Use Survey, older men and women spent more time than younger people reading each day. Men and women aged 65-74 spent about an hour a day reading and those aged over 75 spent towards one and a half hours reading (Figure 18.8). In contrast, those in their twenties and thirties spent less than half an hour a day reading. Until men reached retirement age, men and women spent about the same amount of time each day reading but after retirement men spent more time than women reading.

It is not certain why older people read more. Part of the reason may be that they have more unstructured time. It is not clear whether people read more as they grow older or whether the higher levels of reading among today's older people simply reflects a higher level of reading in that age cohort. There is no certain way of knowing whether today's younger people will carry their current levels of reading through into later life.



**Does TV dominate our leisure time?**

The lower level of reading among younger people is not simply because they spent more time watching TV and videos. Indeed, the younger age groups watched less TV than the older groups (Figure 18.9). The age groups that read the most also watched the most TV. Men and women aged 65 and over watched about 3.7 hours of TV a day. TV watching was at its lowest when men and women were aged 35-44 but the time devoted to TV steadily increased from the mid-forties onwards (Figure 18.9). In most age groups, men spent a little more time than women watching TV. Women with dependent children spent the least time of all life stage groups watching TV followed by younger people who lived on their own.

**Are men really obsessed with sport?**

In the 1997 Time Use Survey men spent considerably more time per day playing sport than did women. Overall, women spent 23 minutes a day playing sport while men spent 37 minutes a day – 60 per cent more time per day than women. The gender gap in time spent playing sport was greatest

among young people aged 15-24 (26 minutes for women compared with 52 for men) and when they were aged 65-74 (27 minutes women and 49 minutes for men). In most other age groups men spent about 10 minutes a day more playing sport than similarly aged women (Figure 18.10). The gender differences in the time spent playing sport persisted at all life and family type stages.

**Does anyone have any spare time?**

On average men had 37 minutes free time a day compared with women who had half an hour a day of free time. The amount of free time people have depends on their age, gender and their family stage (Figure 18.11). Young people living on their own have the most free time – males have an hour a day and females have three quarters of an hour free each day. Lone older people and older couples (aged 65 or more) have the next greatest amount of free time. Parents with dependent children have the least free time – around 25 minutes a day. Perhaps surprisingly, lone parents with dependent children had about the same amount of free time each day as did couple parents with dependent children.

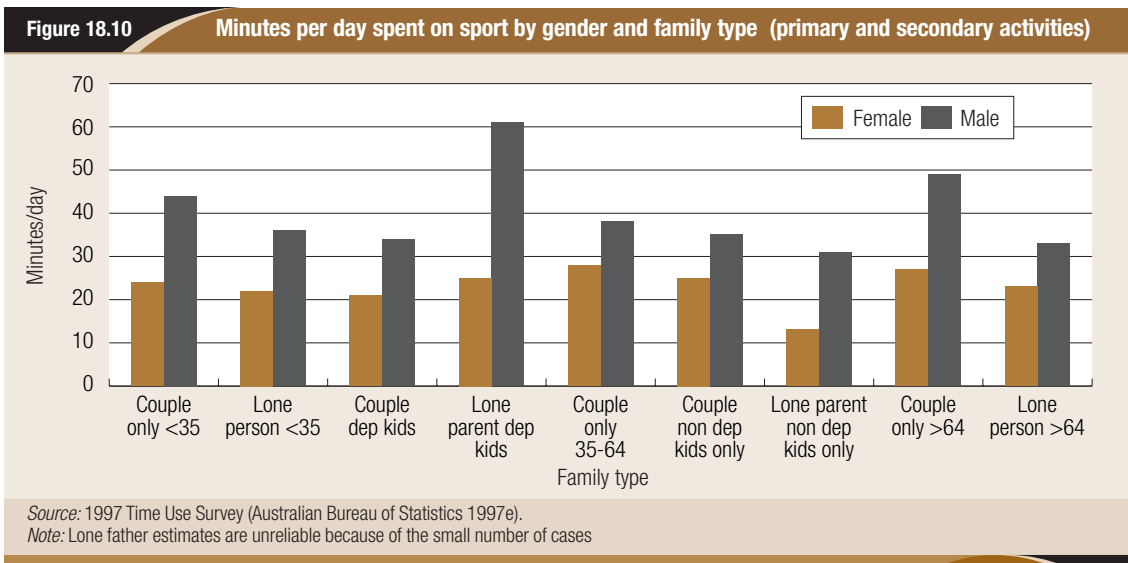
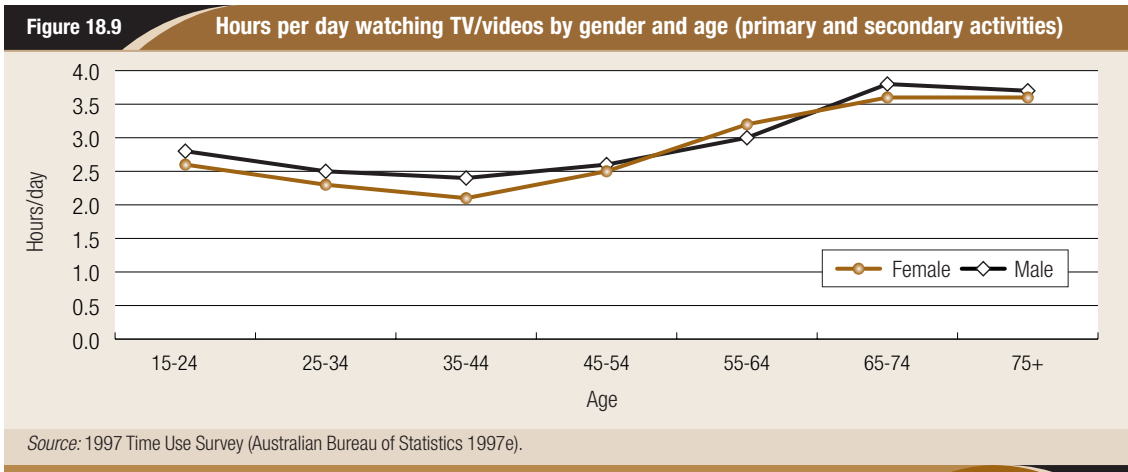
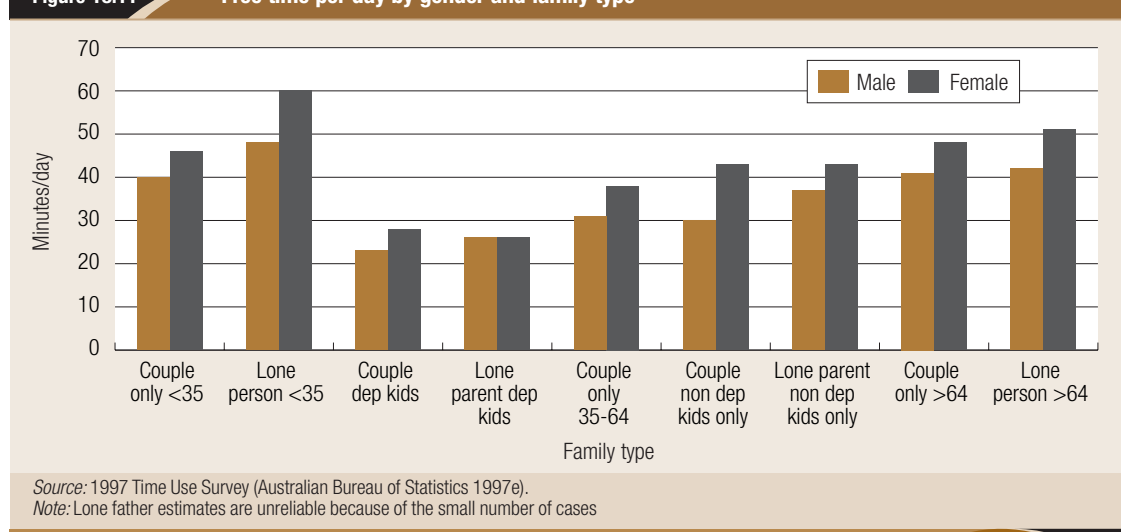


Figure 18.11 Free time per day by gender and family type



## Who does voluntary work?

### How much is voluntary work worth?

By its very nature voluntary work is unpaid work. It is instructive, in this context, to estimate the financial value of the unpaid voluntary work in the Australian population. Using an average pay rate of \$13.73 per hour and the amount of time devoted to voluntary work in the 1997 Time Use Survey, the total value of voluntary work in Australia in 1997 is estimated to be \$9.4 billion per annum<sup>5</sup>.

These estimates do not include all the unpaid work that people did in the wider community – if the value of work such as caring for adults and others outside of the family is added to the value of voluntary work as defined in the ABS time-use classification, the annual value of voluntary work increases to \$10.8 billion per annum.

In 1997 the per capita value of voluntary work as classified by the ABS Time Use Survey was \$669 per year – \$685 by women and \$652 by men<sup>6</sup>.

The amount of time spent on voluntary work by men and women and thus its dollar value differs at different points in the life course (Table 18.9). For women, the peak ages for voluntary work were from 45 to 74. The per capita value of the voluntary work of these female volunteers varied from \$3,779 to \$4,634 per year. Although the oldest women aged over 75 had a relatively low volunteering rate (11.6 per cent), the annual value of the voluntary work of these older women was the highest for any age group of women or men (\$5,759).

Among men, the peak ages for voluntary work were from 55 to over 75. These men tended to do less voluntary work per person than did similarly aged women. Nevertheless, these older male volunteers contributed between \$3,000 to \$5,500 per annum through their unpaid voluntary work (Table 18.9). The level of male voluntary work

increased immediately after the normal retirement age of 65. The annual per capita value of contributions of these men was \$5,681 per annum in unpaid work.

## Do people have any time for their family?

One way of thinking about time-use is to distinguish between time directed to family members and to people beyond the family. To what extent is

Table 18.9 Value of volunteer work by age and gender

Age	Female		Male	
	All \$	Only those who did activity in 2 day period \$	All \$	Only those who did activity in 2 day period \$
15-24	370	2,889	369	3,040
25-44	609	3,436	659	4,652
45-54	974	4,634	563	3,336
55-64	938	3,779	844	3,629
65-74	797	4,608	1,219	5,681
75+	670	5,759	559	2,913

Source: 1997 Australian Time-use Survey (de Vaus, Gray and Stanton 2003).

Table 18.10 Percentage of time directed to self, family and non family members

Time directed for	Male	Female
Self	86.0	76.7
Other household family	9.3	18.5
Family in other household	0.7	1.2
Non family	4.0	3.7
Total to family (exc self)	10.0	19.7

Source: 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).  
Note: Excludes time directed to personal care and paid employment. For some activities such as cooking, cleaning etc there is some difficulty in people identifying to whom it is directed.

time allocation family focused? The following results indicate the proportion of people's time that is directed to family members in their home, family members beyond their home and to non family members. The time spent in paid employment and on personal care (sleeping eating etc) is excluded from these calculations.

Table 18.10 shows that, in the 1997 Time Use Survey, the bulk of time was spent on activities that people construed as being for themselves. Overall, respondents in the Time Use Survey indicated that:

- 14.4 per cent of their time was spent on activities for other members of their household.
- Just under 1 per cent of time (above and beyond the time on personal care and employment) was spent on activities for family members living in other households.
- 3.8 per cent of time was directed to non family members.

Women spent a greater proportion of their time than men on other members of their own household and family members overall:

- 18.5 per cent of the time of women compared to just 9.3 per cent of the time of men was for other members of the household.
- Women spent almost twice as much time as men on members of their family living elsewhere;
- Overall, women spent twice as much of their time on family members than did men (19.7 per cent compared with 10 per cent).
- Excluding the time in paid work, men and women devoted about the same proportion of their time to non family members such as friends and other community members.

Apart from the time people spent on activities for themselves, women spent over five times more time on other family members than they directed to non family members such as friends, neighbours and the wider community (19.7 per cent compared

with 3.7 per cent of their time). In contrast, (excluding employment) men spent just two and half times more time on family members than on non family members (10 per cent compared with 4 per cent).

The amount of time a person spent on activities for themselves varied across the life course (Table 18.11). Doing things for oneself took up the smallest proportion of the time of parents with dependent children. For these parents, about three quarters of their time was spent on activities they said were for themselves. This compares with figures between 85 to 95 per cent for younger and older people without children.

Among those with dependent children there were clear differences in the amount of time that mothers and fathers spent on self-related activities. Partnered women with dependent children spent 69 per cent of their time for self-related activities compared with comparable fathers who spent 82 per cent of their time in this way. Lone mothers with dependent children spent 74 per cent of their time on self-related activities compared with lone fathers who spent 90 per cent of their non work time in this way.

The amount of time directed to other family members was also closely tied to family type and life stage. People with dependent children spent about 20 per cent of their time (excluding employment and personal care) doing things for other household members. Partnered mothers of dependent children spent twice the share of their time doing things for others in the household than did similar fathers (27 per cent of time compared with 13 per cent)<sup>7</sup>

Young and older couples without children spent about 10 per cent of their time doing things directly for their partner.

Regardless of stage in the life course, only a relatively small proportion of time was devoted to doing things for people outside of the family (Table 18.10). Young lone people spent the largest share of

**Table 18.11** Percentage of time spent for family and non family members (excludes personal care and employment)

	Couple only <35 %	Lone person <35 %	Couple, dependent children %	Lone parent, dependent children %	Couple only 35-64 %	Couple, non dependent children only %	Lone parent non dependent children only %	Couple only >64 %	Lone person >64 %
Self	84.8	91.9	74.6	76.7	80.9	82.6	87.2	85.5	94.8
Family in household	9.3	0.9	21.2	19.4	14.2	12.3	8.6	11.0	0.8
Family in other household	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.7	1.5	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.9
Non family	4.8	6.3	3.7	3.2	3.4	4.2	3.2	2.6	2.6
<i>Family total</i>	<i>10.4</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>15.7</i>	<i>13.2</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>11.9</i>	<i>2.7</i>

Source: 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).  
 Note: Time excludes time on personal care and employment activities

their time doing things for non family members (6.3 per cent) but the typical share of time spent in this way was closer to 3 per cent. Younger people spent more time doing things for non family members than did older people. Those over 65 spent just 2.5 per cent of their time doing things for people beyond their family.

Across the life course, and in different family types, very little time was spent on activities for family members living elsewhere. Virtually all the family-directed time was for household family members rather than those in other households.

### Does marriage make a difference to time-use?

Differences in the domestic division of labour within married and cohabiting couples were discussed in Chapter 10. This section, therefore, focuses on the question of whether the time-use of women is only different to that of men when they are partnered.

#### Do women just use time differently when they have a partner?

Gender differences in time-use are often attributed to the impact of marriage on time-use. Marriage, especially when combined with children, is seen to be responsible for the gendered division of labour within the home. Bittman (1995a) for example, argues that on marriage men typically transfer the indoor housework to their wife.

If the gendered patterns of time-use found among couples is due simply to living as a couple then there should be no gender differences (or at least much smaller differences) in time-use among

single people. Put more simply, what happens to the time-use of a man when he has no wife or partner to do things for him? Table 18.12 reports the gender gaps in the time-use of lone men and women from the 1997 Time Use Survey and compares these with partnered men and women (without children).

### Is it only partnered women who do more domestic work?

As far as time spent on domestic work is concerned, the gender gap was much larger among partnered men and women than it was among lone men and women. This pattern held across all age groups. For example:

- Among those aged 15-24, the gender gap in time devoted to domestic tasks was twice as large among partnered people (women did 55 minutes a day more than men) than among lone men and women (women did 27 minutes more per day).
- The gap was even larger among those aged 25-44 where partnered women did 71 minutes a day more domestic work than did partnered men, while lone women did just 12 minutes a day more than lone men.

These patterns suggest that at least two things are contributing to gender gaps in the time spent on domestic work. The first is that partnered women take over some of the domestic work, or at least take on the extra domestic work involved in being a couple. However, the fact that lone women did more domestic work than lone men also suggests women put more time than men into domestic work regardless of whether they had a partner.

**Table 18.12** Gender gap (minutes per day) in time on various activities—lone persons and couple only (female vs male) (primary and secondary activities)

		Age group			
		15-24	25-44	45-64	>64
Personal care	Lone person	-24.3 <sup>a</sup>	34.1	41.7	6.2
	Couple only	6.5	30.2	13.9	-3.7
Employment	Lone person	-23.4	-59.6	-109.5	-21.8
	Couple only	-61.1	-111.4	-142.8	-17.2
Domestic work	Lone person	26.6	12.0	53.3	18.8
	Couple only	55.3	71.0	112.4	80.7
Purchasing	Lone person	22.7	18.6	13.5	-2.0
	Couple only	9.5	28.0	15.9	-3.7
Voluntary work	Lone person	4.9	-5.2	11.1	-6.3
	Couple only	-2.7	2.1	2.1	2.7
Social & community participation	Lone person	29.6	1.6	4.2	3.9
	Couple only	25.0	8.5	9.8	1.1
Recreation	Lone person	-46.8	22.9	-25.3	59.2
	Couple only	25.4	-2.7	19.5	-31.4

Source: 1997 Time Use Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997e).

<sup>a</sup> Positive values mean that women did more; negative values mean women did less

### Do women relinquish leisure when they have a partner?

The gender gap in leisure and recreation was very different between lone and partnered people and differed across age groups. Among younger people lone women spent about three quarters of an hour per day less than similarly aged men spent on leisure and recreation activities. Partnered women of the same age spent almost half an hour more than partnered men on these activities. A similar pattern applied for those aged 45-64.

However, among those aged 25-44, lone women spent 23 minutes more per day than lone men on recreation activities. Partnered women in this age group spent about the same amount of time as men on recreation and leisure. Older lone women spent an hour more each day on recreation activities than did lone men, while partnered older women spent half an hour less than partnered older men.

### Employment

Regardless of their age and whether or not they were living alone or with a partner (but without children), women consistently spent less time than men on paid employment. However, these gender differences were much more substantial among partnered than lone women. For example:

- Lone women aged 15-24 without children spent 23 minutes a day less than men on paid employment; partnered women in the same age group spent an hour a day less than comparable partnered men.
- Lone women aged 25-44 without children spent an hour a day less in employment than comparable lone men; partnered women of the same age and without children spent almost two hours a day less on employment than comparable men.

As far as employment and domestic work were concerned there were more pronounced gender gaps in the time devoted to domestic work and paid employment among partnered people than lone people. However, regardless of whether they were partnered or living alone, women without children spent more time than men on domestic work and less on paid employment. However, the gender gap was much greater between partnered men and women than among lone men and women. This pattern of results suggests that gender differences in time allocation are partly linked to a redistribution of tasks when people partner. However, the fact that some gender differences in time-use exist among lone men and women suggests that the differences in time-use cannot simply be attributed to men transferring their indoor housework to their wife.

### Endnotes

- 1 Since these estimates are based on time spent on both primary and secondary activities these estimates of the value of the work performed are greater than the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates which are based on primary activities alone (ABS 2000j).
- 2 The lower total value of the unpaid work of older men is partly because they do less on a per capita basis but it is mainly because there are fewer older men than older women in the older population.
- 3 These estimates are based on valuations of time spent on domestic activities as indicated in the 1997 Time Use Survey. For details of the methodology used in estimating these figures see de Vaus, Gray and Stanton (2003).
- 4 However, it should be borne in mind that on average, men who work full time work more hours per week than women who work full time. If it had been possible to take account of these differences, the gender gap between men and women working full time may have been less but it is unlikely that it would have disappeared.
- 5 This estimate is different from that provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics because the ABS estimates are based on the 1992 coding of voluntary work, and because ABS estimates do not include secondary time-use. For details of the methodology employed for this estimate see de Vaus, Gray and Stanton (2003).
- 6 Since many people do not participate in any volunteer work, the per capita value of voluntary work of actual volunteers will be much higher than this figure.
- 7 Of course employment time can be construed as being for other members of the household so the exclusion of employment from these figures can underestimate the proportion of time committed to activities that are to some extent for the benefit of other family members.

## Highlights

- Gender differences in time-use are especially pronounced regarding the amount of time spent on domestic work and child care (women do much more) and paid employment (men do much more).
- Even when men and women have the same level of paid work, women spend considerably more time on domestic work and child care.
- When the amount of time spent on paid employment, child care and domestic work are combined women, on average, spend an extra hour per day on this set of activities.
- This gender difference in total time spent on this set of three activities is especially pronounced among those with dependent children where couple mothers spend two hours a day more than couple fathers.
- A great deal of time is spent by both men and women on unpaid work. Women undertake much more unpaid work than men in all age groups.
- Nationally, the annual net value of the unpaid work of women per year in 1997 was \$225 billion dollars while that of men is \$111 billion.
- Among women aged 25-44 the annual per capita value of their unpaid work in 1997 was \$45,917. Similarly aged men contributed almost \$20,000 per annum per capita.
- Older people contribute a considerable amount to the nation through their unpaid work. In 1997, each woman aged 65-74 undertook an average \$24,192 worth of unpaid work. Similarly aged men undertook \$18,357 worth of unpaid work in 1997.
- The gender gap in domestic work is greatest among men and women aged 25-64. Among younger and older men and women the gender gap in the time devoted to domestic work is much less but still indicates that women in all age groups do more domestic work than men.
- In terms of the domestic work undertaken, there is a very clear gender segregation. Most of the domestic work of women is inside work while less than half of the domestic work undertaken by men is inside work.
- Older people spend much more time per day reading than do younger people.
- The age groups that spend a lot of time reading also spend a lot of time watching TV.
- In all age groups and family types, men spend considerably more time per day playing sport.
- In all age groups and all family types, men have more free time on average each day than do women.
- Both men and women contribute substantially to the community through the time they contribute through voluntary work. Across most age groups men and women make a similar level of contribution through voluntary work.
- Participation in voluntary work peaks for men and women aged 55-64. In 1997, those who did voluntary work in this age group each undertook work valued at approximately \$3,700 per annum.
- Apart from time spent on employment, personal care and other activities undertaken for personal benefit, the bulk of time spent by both men and women was undertaken for family members living with them. Relatively little time was spent on activities directed towards family members outside the household.
- Women spent twice as much of their time than men directed to family members.
- Gender gaps in time-use are greatest between partnered men and women (without children) than between lone men and women. However, in all age groups, lone women spent more time than lone men on domestic tasks and less time than lone men on paid employment.