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# Is the five minute shower an urban myth? Part 2

An ech<sub>2</sub>o report • March 2012

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We would like to thank everyone who answered the survey about how they use water, especially the school pupils who collected data about their families as well as completing the information about themselves.

Thank you to Trevon Jervis and Laurie Wilkinson of ech<sub>2</sub>o for analysing the information.

All conclusions drawn in this report are by ech<sub>2</sub>o.

Please contact us at [info@ech2o.co.uk](mailto:info@ech2o.co.uk) if you have any questions about this report, or would like us to work with your school pupils, tenants or building users about how they use water.

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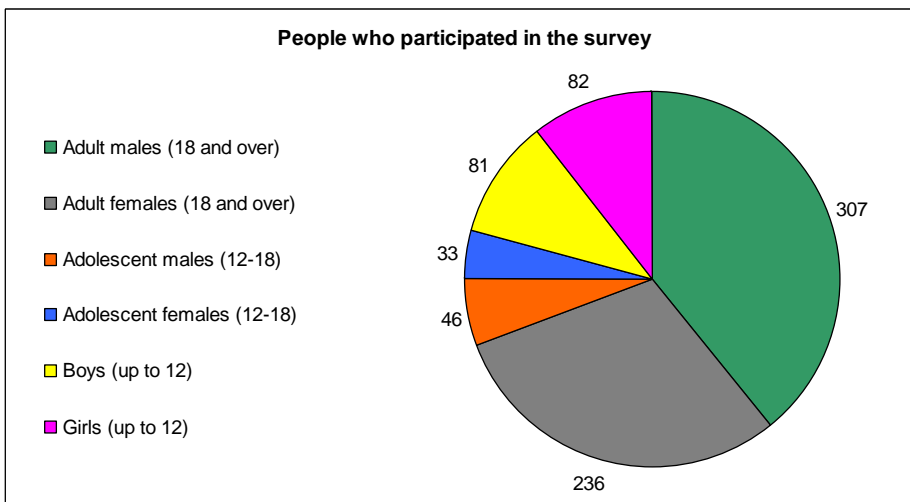
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### How do we shower in the UK?

In February 2010 we published a report entitled “Is the five minute shower an urban myth?” In the original report we analysed data we had collected from 415 shower users. In the intervening two years we have continued to collect data. This second report analyses data from a further 785 shower users. As before, we worked with school pupils to collect data about themselves and their families, and also questioned housing association tenants, students, design professionals and members of the general public. The data was collected across the whole range of different cultures and economic classes found in the UK today. However, our questionnaire only asked respondents to identify themselves by gender and age.

The respondents in this second tranche of data differ from the first group. They are not from as wide a cross section of UK society. Of the 785 people questioned, 34% were design professionals, and 69% were adults. The schools were in Sussex rather than inner city London. Less than 30% of the people lived in London compared to 85% in the first survey. In the corresponding years, the message of shorter showers has begun to penetrate the mainstream media. For all of the above reasons we think it is worth analysing the data separately from the first report.<sup>1</sup>

There are two main differences. Shower times are, on average, lower. In the first survey only 29% of respondents had a shower that was five minutes or less, whereas in this survey the corresponding figure is 53%. In this survey just 11% have a shower that is longer than 10 minutes compared to 41% in the first survey.<sup>2</sup> The number of times people bathe a week is also less. In the first survey 23% of respondents did not bath or shower every, whereas in this survey over 50% of those questioned do not bathe every day.



This data about showers was taken from a survey of 954 people.<sup>3</sup> 785 of the respondents have showers.

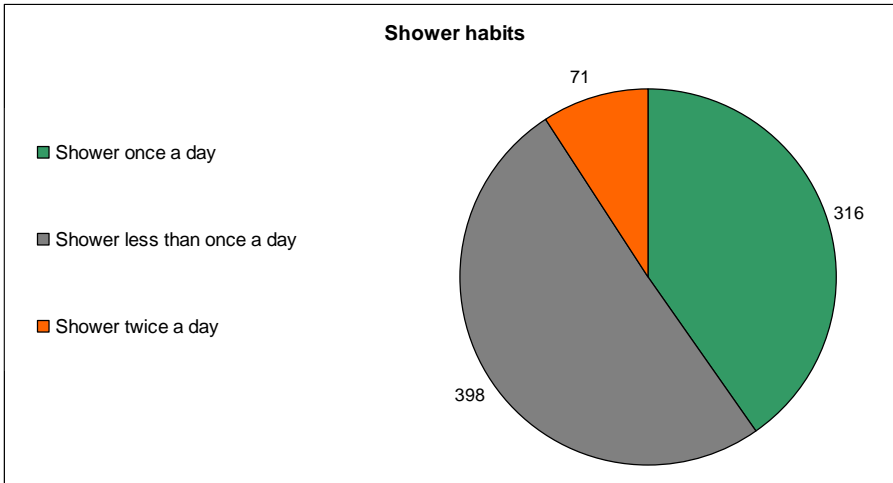
Data was collected from 434 males and 351 females. Most of the boys and girls were aged 9 to 11 when they answered the survey with about 25% being younger children.

<sup>1</sup> We have also amalgamated the information in “Is the five minute shower an urban myth? Part 3”

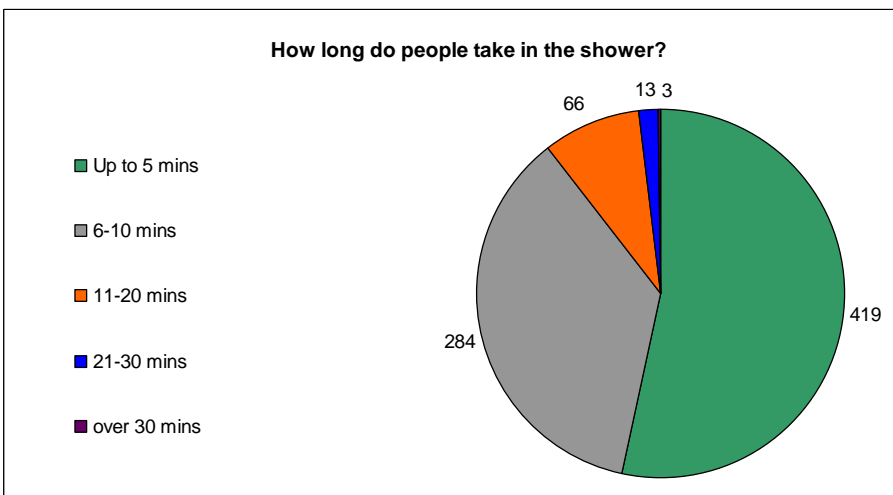
<sup>2</sup> In the first survey 30% of adult males had a shower longer than 10 minutes; the corresponding figure was 9% in the second survey. In the first survey 73% of adolescent girls had a shower longer than ten minutes, compared to 21% in the second survey.

<sup>3</sup> 598 of the respondents were from 144 households, (data collected by the pupils from two schools) whilst the remaining 356 people answered questions about their own water use only.

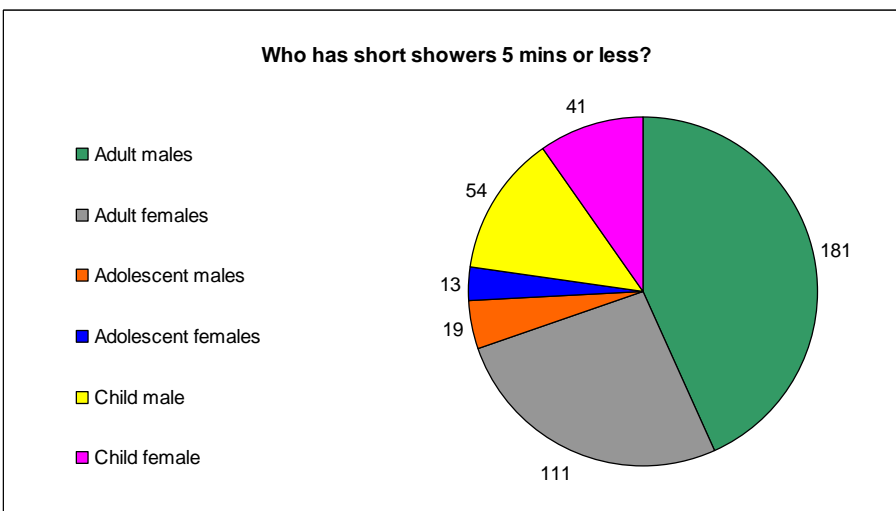
Showering habits



In this survey, most people (51%) do not bathe every day of the week., 42% take a shower once a day and 9% shower twice a day.

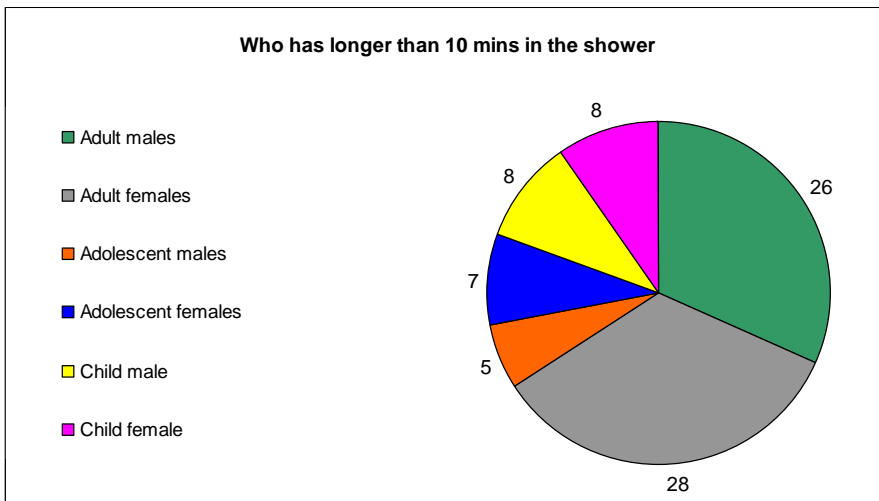


53% of the respondents in this survey have a shower that is 5 minutes or less, 36% have a shower that lasts between 6-10 minutes and just 11% of people spend longer than ten minutes in the shower.



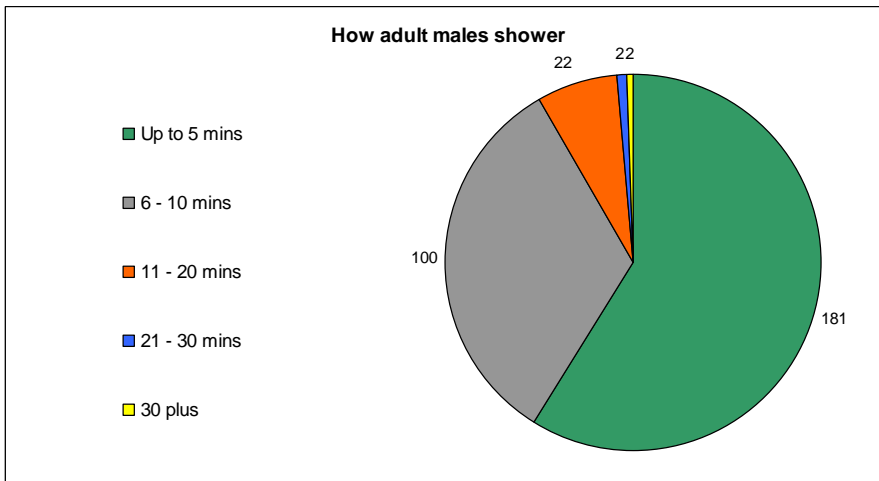
419 respondents in this survey (53%) have a shower that is five minutes or less. Adolescent girls are less likely to have a short shower (39%) than any other group. 59% of adult males have a short shower, and 47% of adult females.



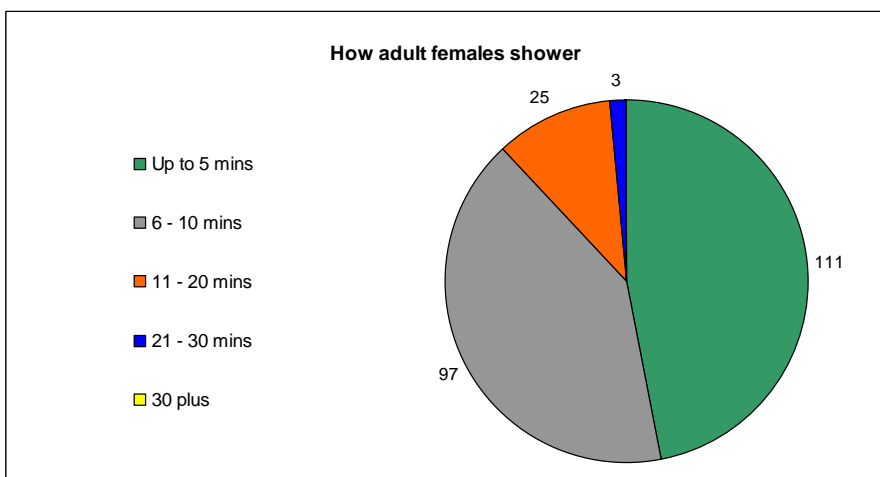


Just 82 people (12%) in this survey have a shower that is longer than 10 minutes. The percentage ranged from 9% of adult males through to 21% of adolescent girls.

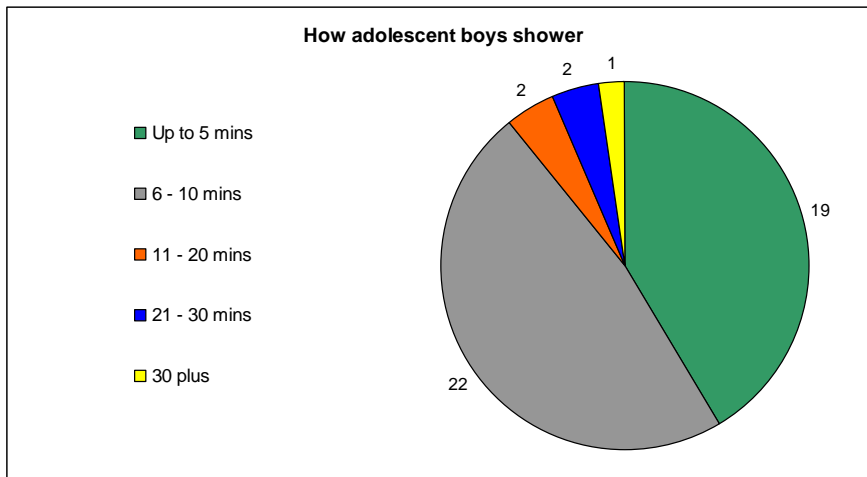
**How each group showered**



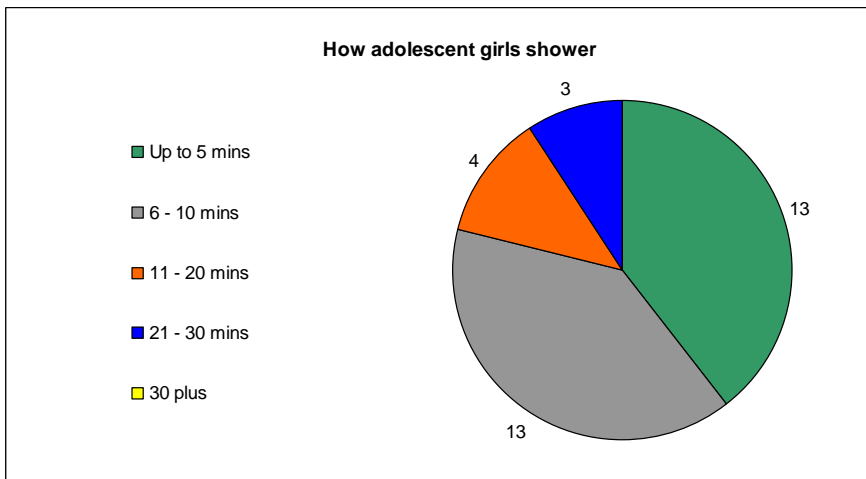
Adults are defined as over 18 years of age. 88% of the 307 men in our survey have a shower that is 10 minutes or less. 59% of the men who answered the survey take less than 5 minutes in the shower as against an average of all respondents of 51%.



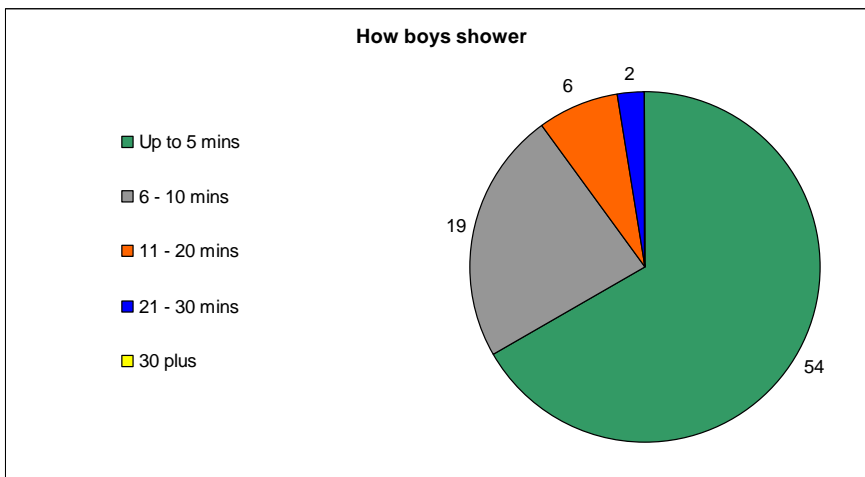
236 women answered this survey. Over 88% of them spend ten minutes or less in the shower. 47% spend 5 minutes or less in the shower, and 41% have a shower that lasts between 6 and 10 minutes.



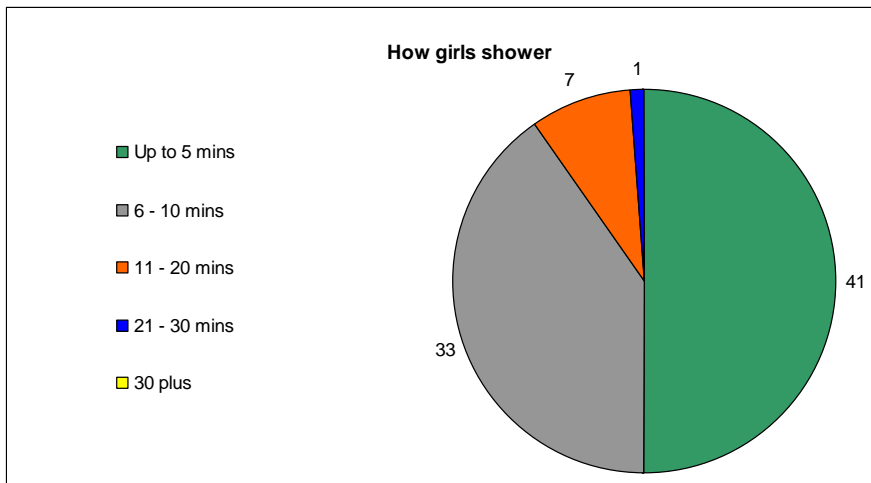
Adolescents are defined as ages 12-18. 46 adolescent boys answered this survey. 41% have a shower that lasts five minutes or less, and 48% have a shower that lasts between six and ten minutes.



Just 33 adolescent girls answered this survey. While 80% of them have a shower that is ten minutes or less, 21% have a shower that lasts longer than ten minutes. This figure compares to an average of 12% across all categories.



Children are defined as ages 11 and younger. Almost 67% of the 81 boys in this survey have a shower of five minutes or less; 10% regularly have a shower that lasts more than 20 minutes.



50% of the 82 girls in this survey have a shower of five minutes or less. However, the girls tend to stay in the shower longer than the boys. 40% of the girls spend 6-10 minutes in the shower compared to 24% of the boys.

### Shower Analysis

Group	Number of people	Shower times				
		Up to 5 minutes	6-10 minutes	11 -20 minutes	21-30 minutes	Over 30 minutes
Adult males	307	181	100	22	2	2
Adult females	236	111	97	25	3	0
Adolescent boys	46	19	22	2	2	1
Adolescent girls	33	13	13	4	3	0
Boys	81	54	19	6	2	0
Girls	82	41	33	7	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>

Group	Number of people	Shower times					Longer than 10 minutes
		Up to 5 minutes	6-10 minutes	11 -20 minutes	21-30 minutes	Over 30 minutes	
Adult males	307	59.0%	32.6%	7.2%	0.7%	0.7%	8.6%
Adult females	236	47.0%	41.1%	10.6%	1.3%	0.0%	11.9%
Adolescent boys	46	41.3%	47.8%	4.3%	4.3%	2.2%	10.8%
Adolescent girls	33	39.4%	39.4%	12.1%	9.1%	0.0%	21.2%
Boys	81	66.7%	23.5%	7.4%	2.5%	0.0%	9.9%
Girls	82	50.0%	40.2%	8.5%	1.2%	0.0%	9.7%
<b>Average</b>		<b>50.6%</b>	<b>37.4%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>785</b>						

<b>How long is your average shower time in minutes?</b>			
<b>In Minutes</b>	<b>No. of people</b>	<b>In Minutes</b>	<b>No. of people</b>
1	1	11	1
2	39	12	5
3	55	13	1
4	52	15	41
5	272	17	1
6	27	20	17
7	46	25	2
8	32	30	11
9	4	40	1
10	175	45	2
<b>Total no. of people answered</b>			<b>785</b>
<b>Average shower time in minutes</b>			<b>8</b>

For many years the average shower time in the UK was estimated at five minutes. In the original “Is the five minute shower an urban myth?” report, the average shower time was 13 minutes. Research by Waterwise in 2010 showed average shower times to be about ten minutes. The people in this survey have an eight minute shower on average.



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ech<sub>2</sub>o consultants ltd  
27 Holywell Row  
London  
EC2A 4JB

020 7183 1908  
[info@ech2o.co.uk](mailto:info@ech2o.co.uk)

[www.ech2o.co.uk](http://www.ech2o.co.uk)

Company No: 06425345.  
Registered office: 5 Roseberry Gardens London N4 1JQ

**ech<sub>2</sub>o**

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