STATE OF DEVELOPER WELLNESS

Insights on developer happiness, productivity & work fulfilment in Q1 2023

1ST EDITION

Wellness by developer nation

Our vision is to empower developers to shape the future!



About Developer Nation Community

Developer Nation is a global community helping software creators grow throughout their coding journey and answer burning questions such as:

What software developer careers are out there? Which ones have the most demand? What skills or formal training should I acquire? How can I become more productive and efficient?

This is a space where you can set the right foundations for your career, learn how you stack up against emerging software development trends, get tips, discover opportunities for professional growth, and plan wisely your next moves.

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Developer Nation Broadcast
Developer Nation
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A word from Vanessa

I want to take a moment to thank the Developer Nation community for taking part in our first survey dedicated to developer wellness. Listening to your feedback in recent years, it became clear that our community members face anxiety and burnout. We heard you! I hope that the report will open up new conversations surrounding developer wellness and we can come together within the industry to improve the well-being of all of us.



My wellness tips: *Get your thoughts, ideas and worries out onto paper, break your tasks into manageable chunks, learn breath work, get out in nature, stay hydrated, keep moving during the day, listen to a fun podcast, and start every day with the question "how can I be of service to others today?"*

Vanessa Measom
Developer Success Executive

Wellness tips from our team

Organise your thoughts, your day, and your tasks. Stay active and don’t hesitate to reach out for help.

Anastasia Alexopoulou
Senior Partnerships Manager

For folks working remotely: invest in a good work desk and chair and separate it from your leisure space. Having a good essential aromatic oil in a diffuser also helps lighten the mood sometimes☺. Don’t hesitate to change your work scenery; cafes, mountains and co-working spaces can be great places to work from.

Ayan Pahwa
Developer Advocate

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Wellness tips from us

More wellness tips from the team

It's ok to feel overwhelmed. It's not ok doing nothing about it. Find your passion and let it fill up your batteries. Fight energy draining with energy-boosting activities. Motorcycle rides do that for me.

Stathis Georgakopoulos
Product Marketing Manager

If you work remotely, adopt a pet. They will be your companion, distraction and a reminder of a different, stress-less way of being. If you're an anxious type, consider alternating your coffee with decaf - it also helps your nutrient absorption!

Viktorija Ignatavičiūtė
Sr. Community Lead

Find your optimal work hours. Discover the time of day when you're most productive and build your schedule around it. Also, remember to take regular breaks. Coffee or Tea breaks work☕.

Gottfried Moh
Community Lead



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WORKPLACE PERCEPTIONS

01

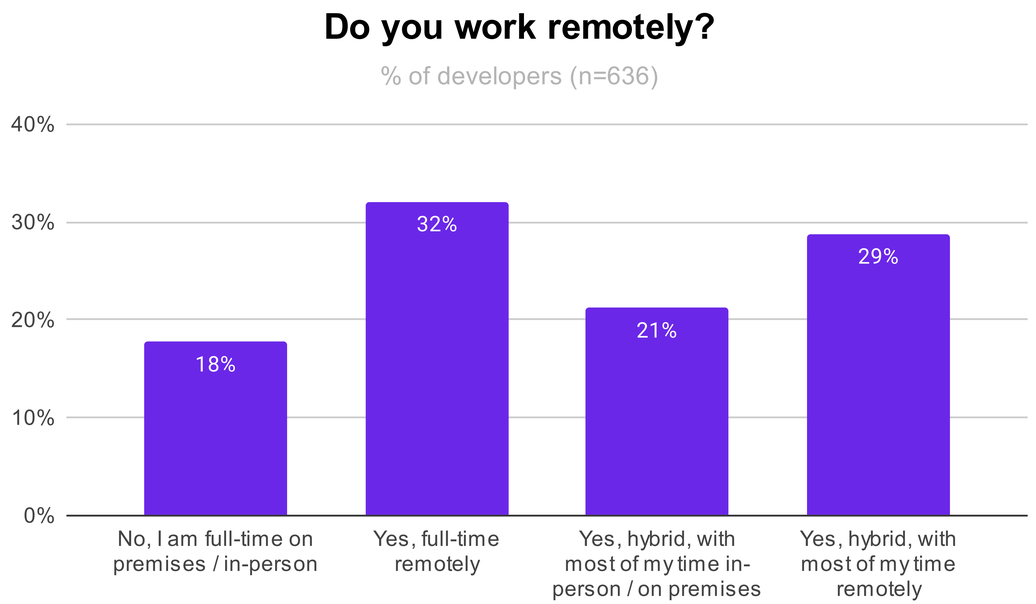
1.1 Distribution of Developers based on their Workplace Setup

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of the work culture and organisational set-up around the world. Though a good chunk of software developers were working remotely, long before COVID-19 broke out, now it has become the new normal.

Organisations have come to understand the cost and time savings involved, and the added value of hiring people within a global range, while it has become clear that most developers value the flexibility of working at the comfort of their homes.

Nevertheless, there are still workplaces not fully set up for remote work by design or function and thus require developers to work on-site for a few days per week if not every day, providing for a hybrid work environment.

In this section, we asked our survey participants about their work setup, whether it’s fully remote or fully on-site or a mix of both, here are the results :



82% of developers work remotely at least some of their time (either fully remotely or hybrid). In fact, 61% of respondents work either fully or mostly remotely.

18% of developers still work from the office premises full time, and 21% working hybrid but spending the most of their time on-site. This may be because of the development work which may not be completed from a home set up.

For example: hardware development might require special hardware or lab equipment to test your code or organisations that embrace the need to have everyone under a common roof enabling quick decision-making and workflow.

1.2 Work setup affecting developer's mental well-being

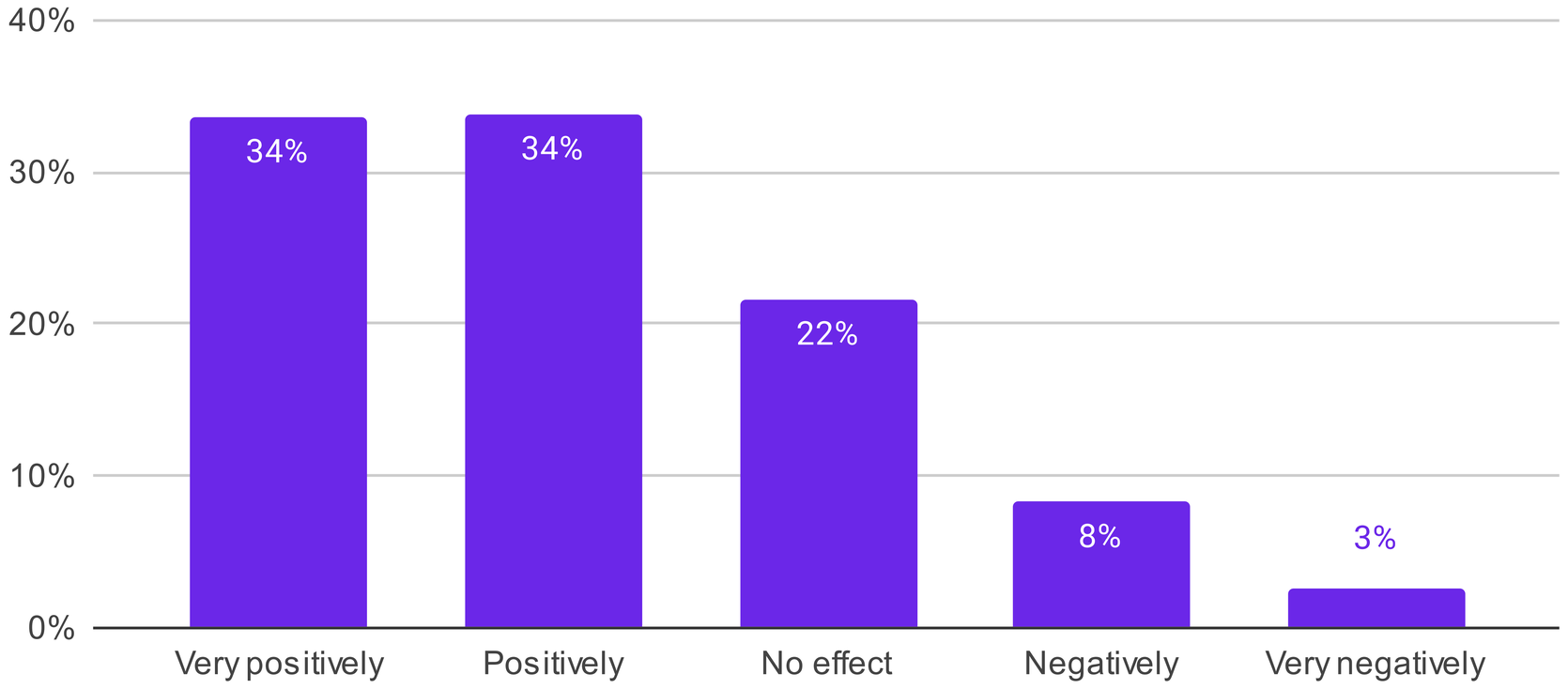
68% of all respondents described their experience of working remotely as either very positive (34%) or positive (34%). Writing code in the comfort of your home office seems to be important as developers can also curate for their individual needs. This also includes physical aspects of the surroundings such as room temperature, lighting, and height of desk, which can improve one's productivity compared to generic ergonomic work setups that are available on-site.

Remote work also accounts for significant cuts in travel time and the cost involved. Provided that remote workers have their work-stations and WiFi, they are offered the option to change the scenery working from a coffee shop or for a workcation in the mountains.

However working remotely, developers do tend to miss out on the water cooler talks and regular updates that you get talking face-to-face with a colleague ensuring regular social interaction and peer-to-peer learning is in place. That could possibly be why ~11% of survey participants responded negatively to the remote work culture.

How positively or negatively does remote work affect your mental wellbeing?

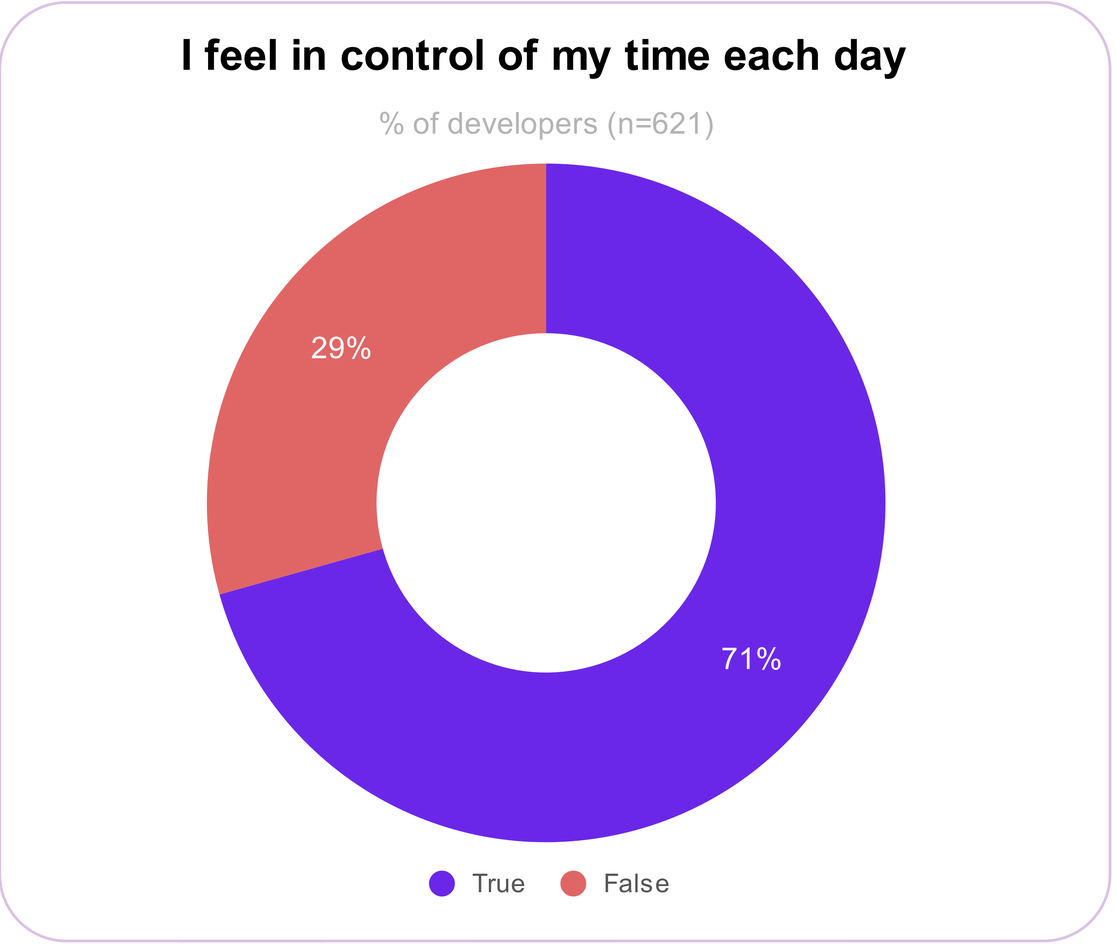
% of developers (n=518)



1.3 Developers and ownership of their time

Most developers (71%) responded that they feel in control of their time each day while 29% don't feel so. Especially working in a remote environment with colleagues from around the world, one can easily lose control of their time if no clear boundaries are defined between work and home.

One can reclaim the lost time and ensure a focused work environment by assigning clear priorities, blocking time off to work on them, and ensuring their work status is communicated to colleagues.

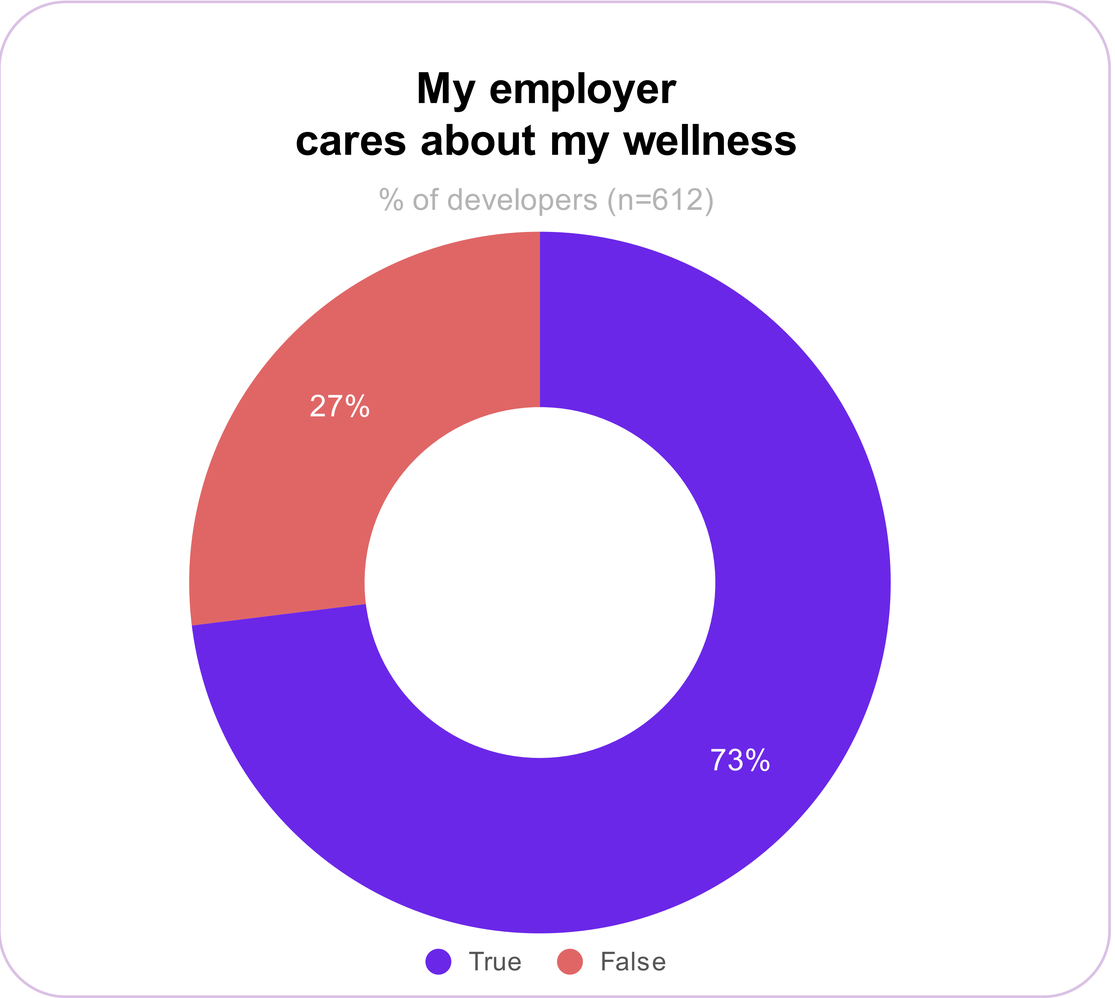


> *One should not feel bad about putting* ***Do Not Disturb*** *status on your slack workspace when focusing on an important task.*

1.4 Employers prioritising Developers' Wellness

73% of developers responded that their employer cares about their wellness, while 27% of developers don’t feel so, indicating that employers may not be prioritising employee well-being or lack the mindset and experience to do that.

Employee wellness can be ensured in various ways from regularly taking feedback/surveys on their well-being to organising activities, team building drills and healthy internal competitions. Developers might expect part of their company's annual budget to be allocated to upgrading their work devices or learning a new skill as a wellness activity.

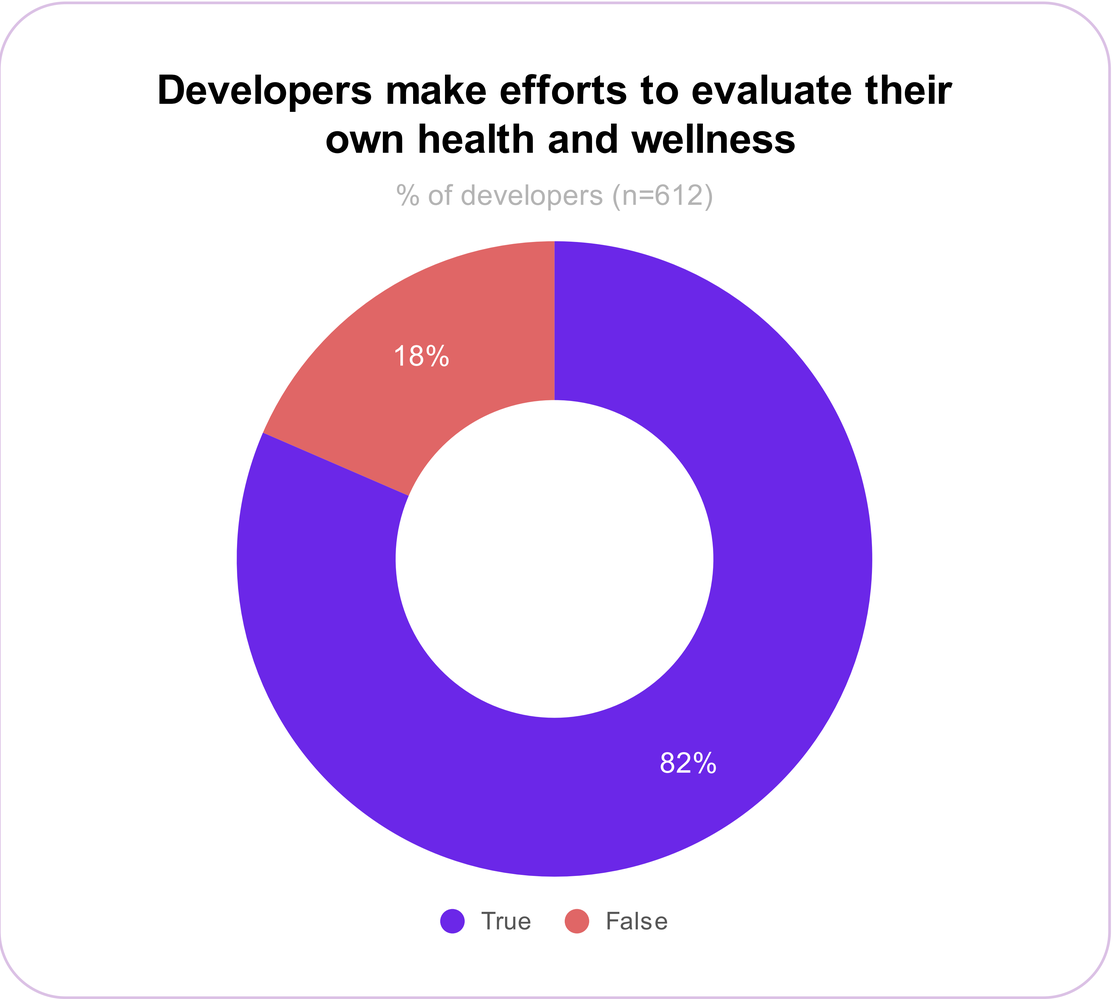


1.5 Developers' health and wellness self-evaluation

A wide majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they regularly evaluate their health and wellness.

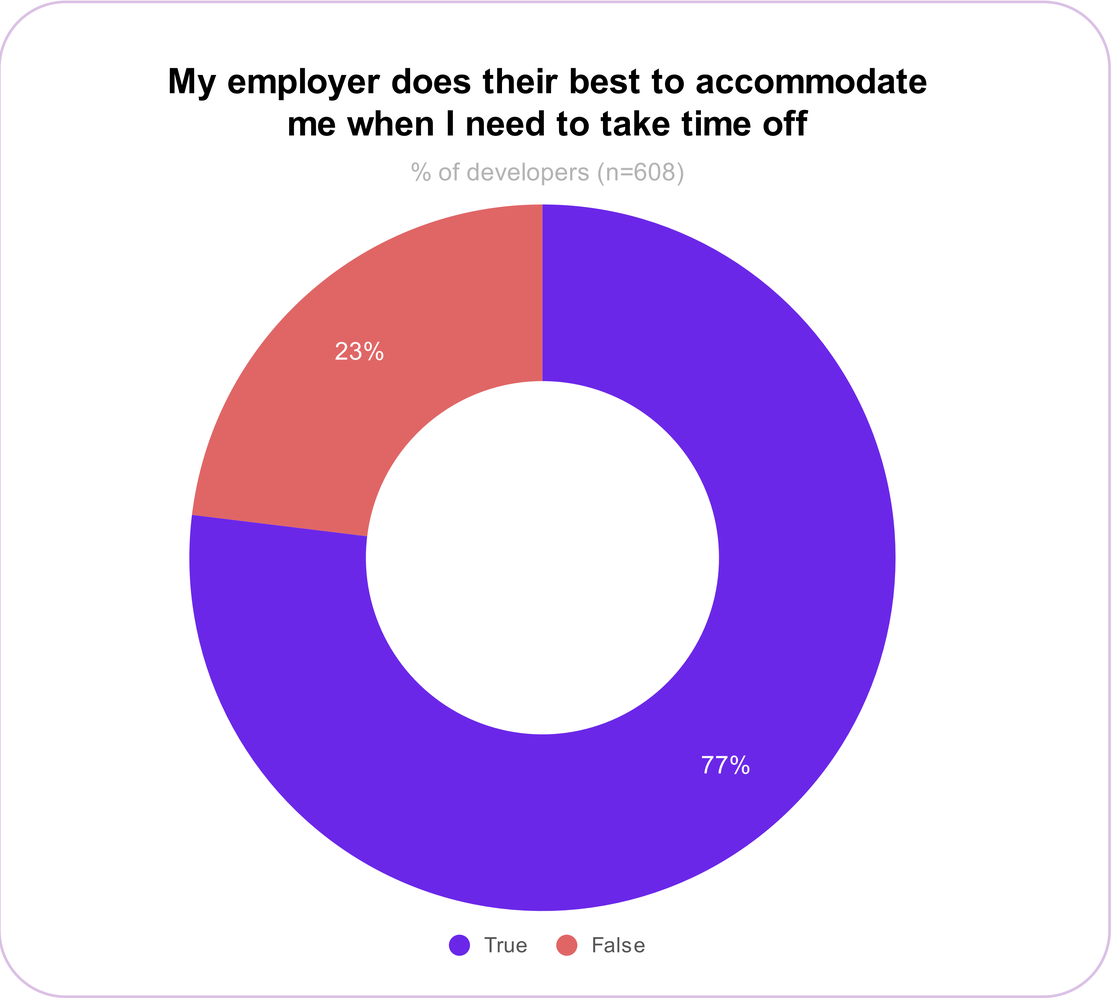
Developers are often exposed to high-stress problem statements hence it becomes even more essential to take care of their health and well-being to ensure they are not only productive but also happy while doing their job.

Ensuring good quality of sleep, having regular breaks and having health check-ins are some easy ways to prioritise one's health. Fortunately, there are apps and devices that can help, like sleep trackers, fitness bands and smartwatches.



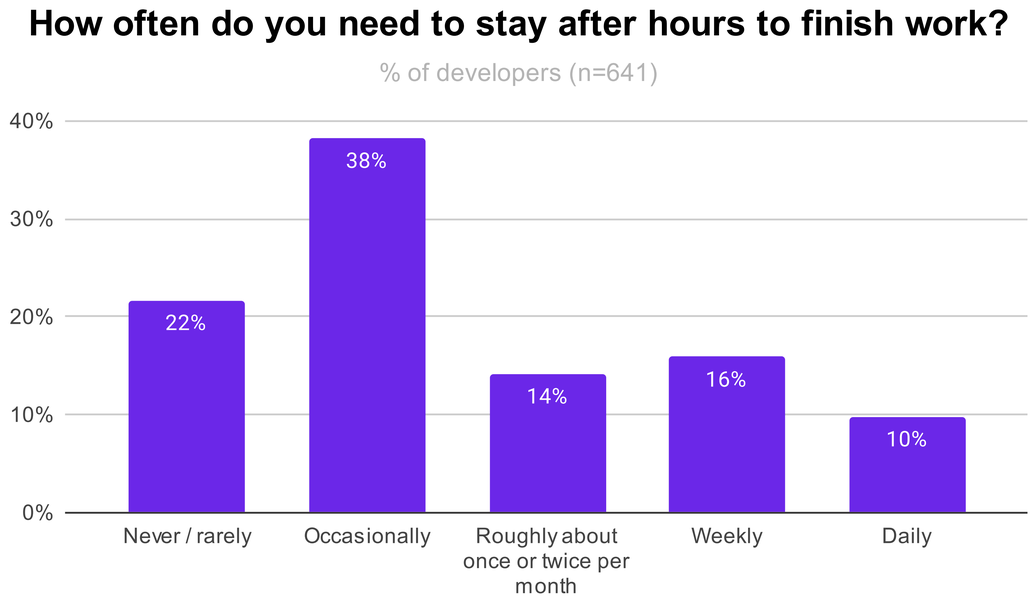
1.6 Developers' time-off

Most modern developer organisations have various leave quotas to ensure their developers are well-equipped with essential time off whenever needed. This is reflected in most developers responding that they feel their employers do their best to accommodate them when they need the time off.

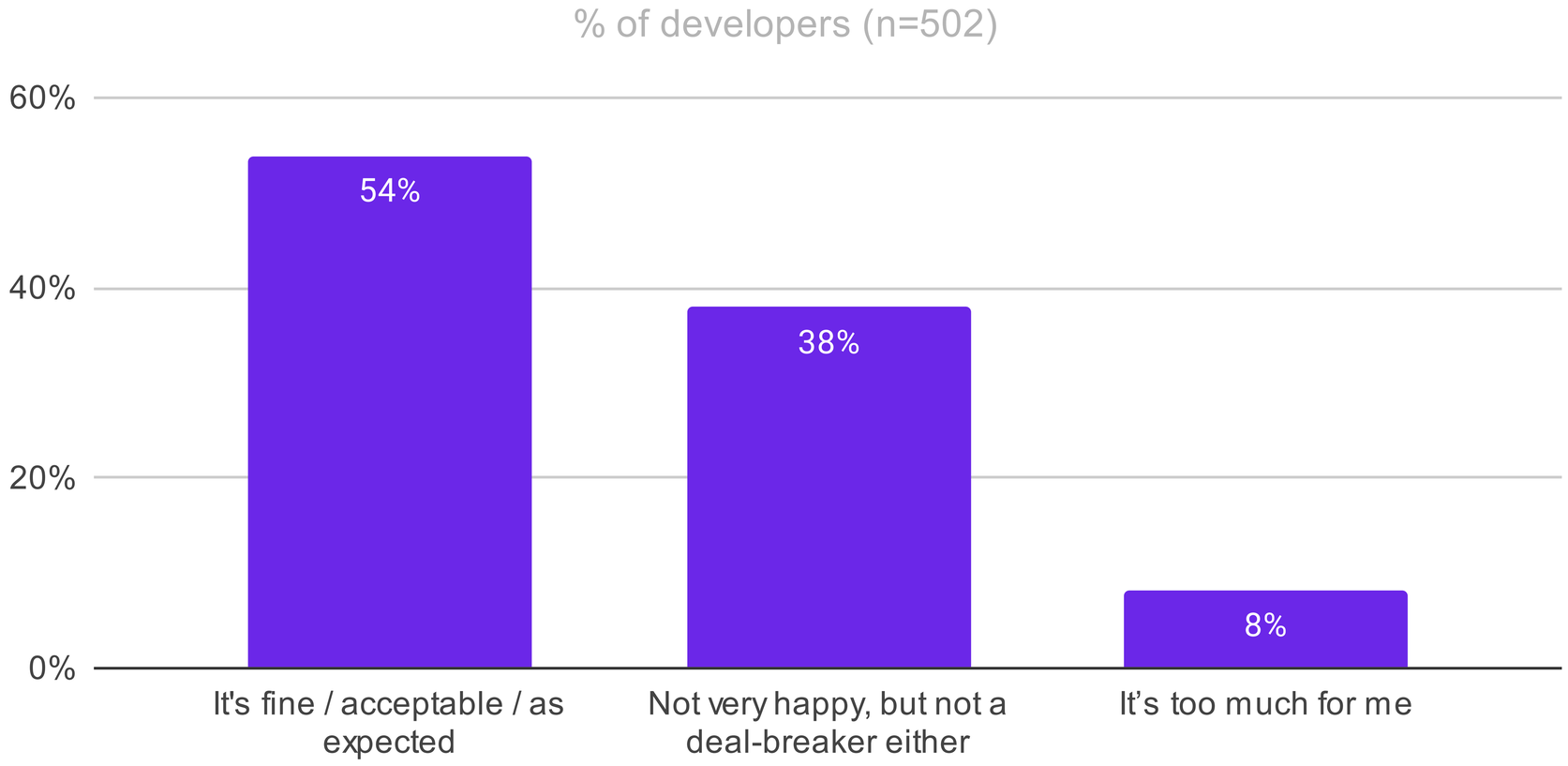


1.7 Developers need to stay after work hours to finish the task

Developers solve real-world problems and often for that reason, they may find themselves spending extra hours of work, smashing bugs in their programs or refactoring their code. A big majority of 78% of developers find themselves working extra hours, 26% having to do so on a weekly or daily basis.



How do you feel about working after hours as often as you do?





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DEVELOPER BURNOUT

02

Developer Burnout

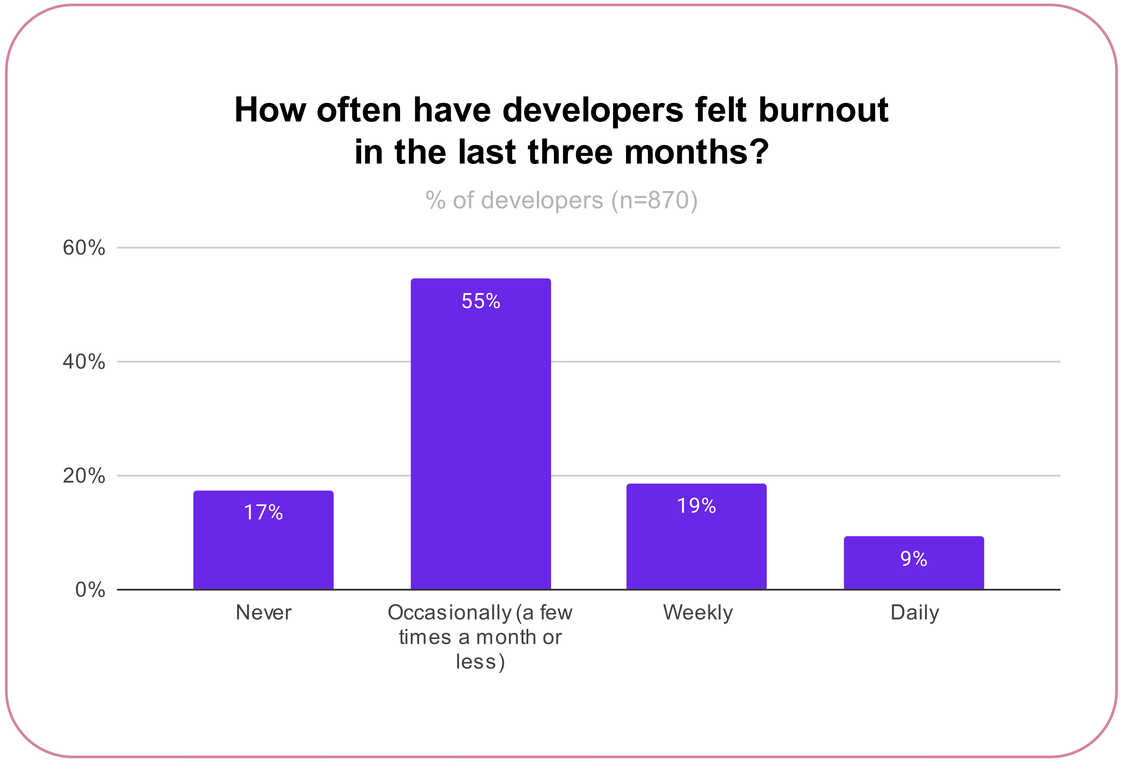
Burnouts are common in almost every profession. When it comes to the tech industry, a developer might feel burnout for various reasons such as pressure to meet deadlines leading to high workloads and longer working hours, sometimes even doing the same sort of work on a daily basis thus lacking challenges and making the environment monotonous. Developers may also find themselves feeling burnout if they’re working on a project where priorities are constantly changing.

We asked our survey participants how often they felt burnout during the last quarter and here are the results:



2.1 Developers feeling burnout in the last quarter

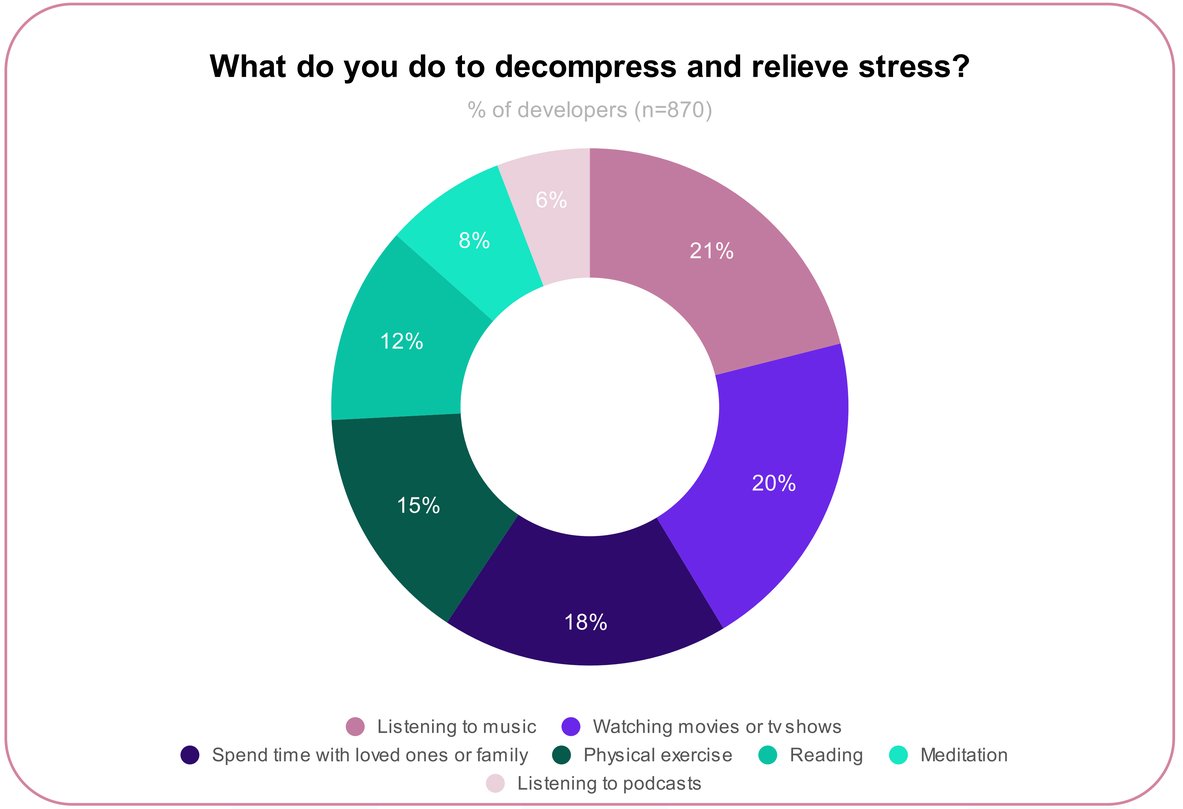
An alarming 83% of developers report feeling burnout at least occasionally, with more than one in four (28%) feeling burnt out weekly or daily.



2.2 Developers decompressing and stress-relieving activities

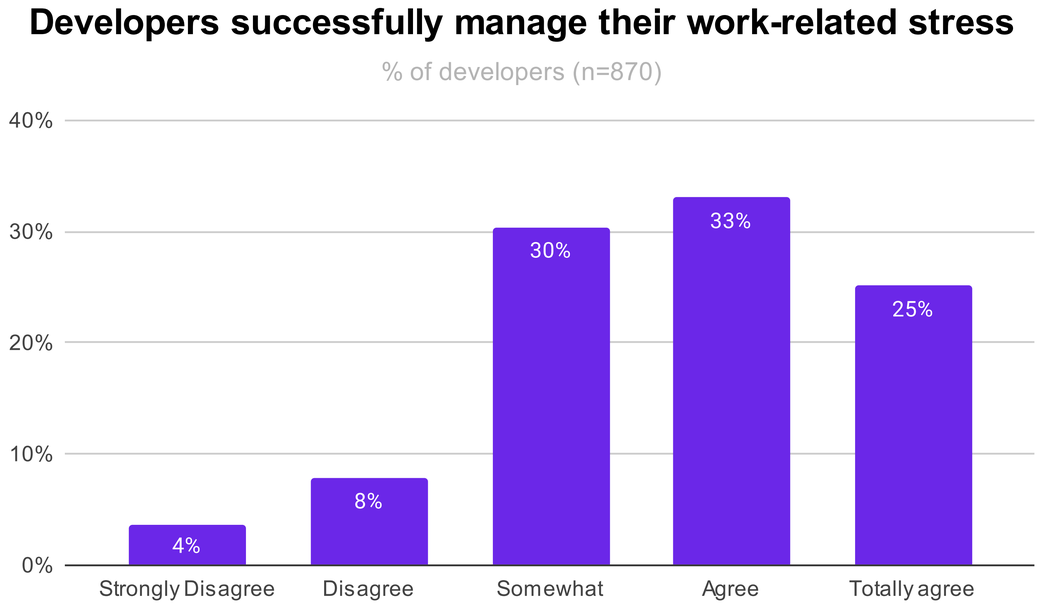
There can be many ways one can decompress and relieve stress. We asked our survey participants what activities they undertake to decompress and here's what they have to say.

41.5% of developers decompress by either listening to music or watching movies/TV. **14.8%** indulge in physical exercise while **7.6%** of participants also meditate to relieve stress.



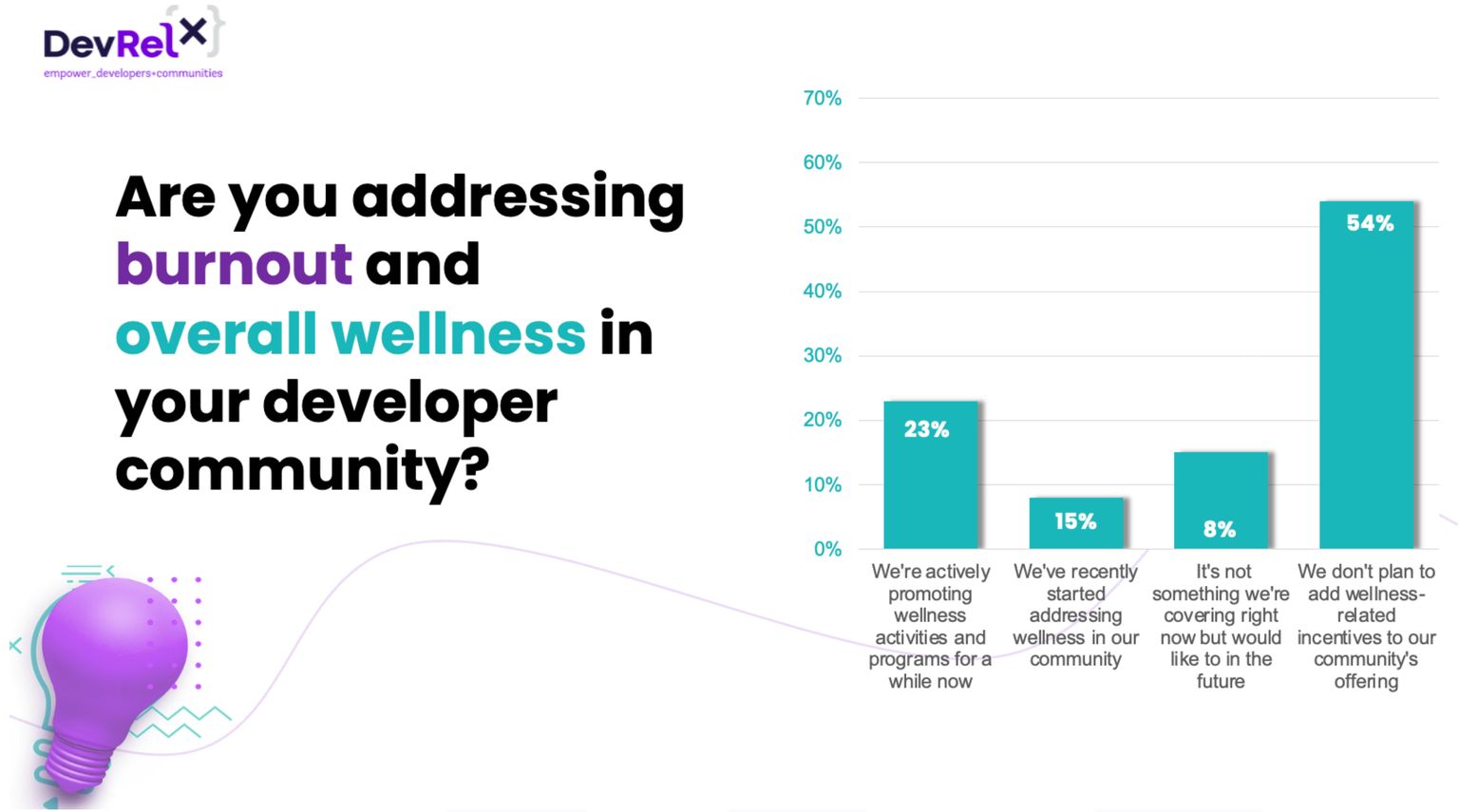
2.3 Developers managing work-related stress

Only **12%** feel that they can not manage their work-related stress. **33%** of developers agree, and **30%** somewhat agree that they successfully manage their work-related stress. However, for the **8%** who disagree and **4%** who strongly disagree and cannot control their work-related stress, regular check-ins and support from employers might be helpful to navigate this challenge.



2.4 Results from a poll from the DevRelX Community

While working on the survey, we also reached out to the members of our DevRelX community, comprising of Developer Advocates, DevRel practitioners and community builders, asking if they're addressing burnout and overall wellness in their respective developer communities, and here are the results.





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DEVELOPER HAPPINESS & HEALTH LIFESTYLES

03

Developer Happiness & Health lifestyles

In this survey section, we asked the participants what makes them happy and their exercise and sleep routine. In the following sections of this chapter, we will see what they have to say about their lifestyle.

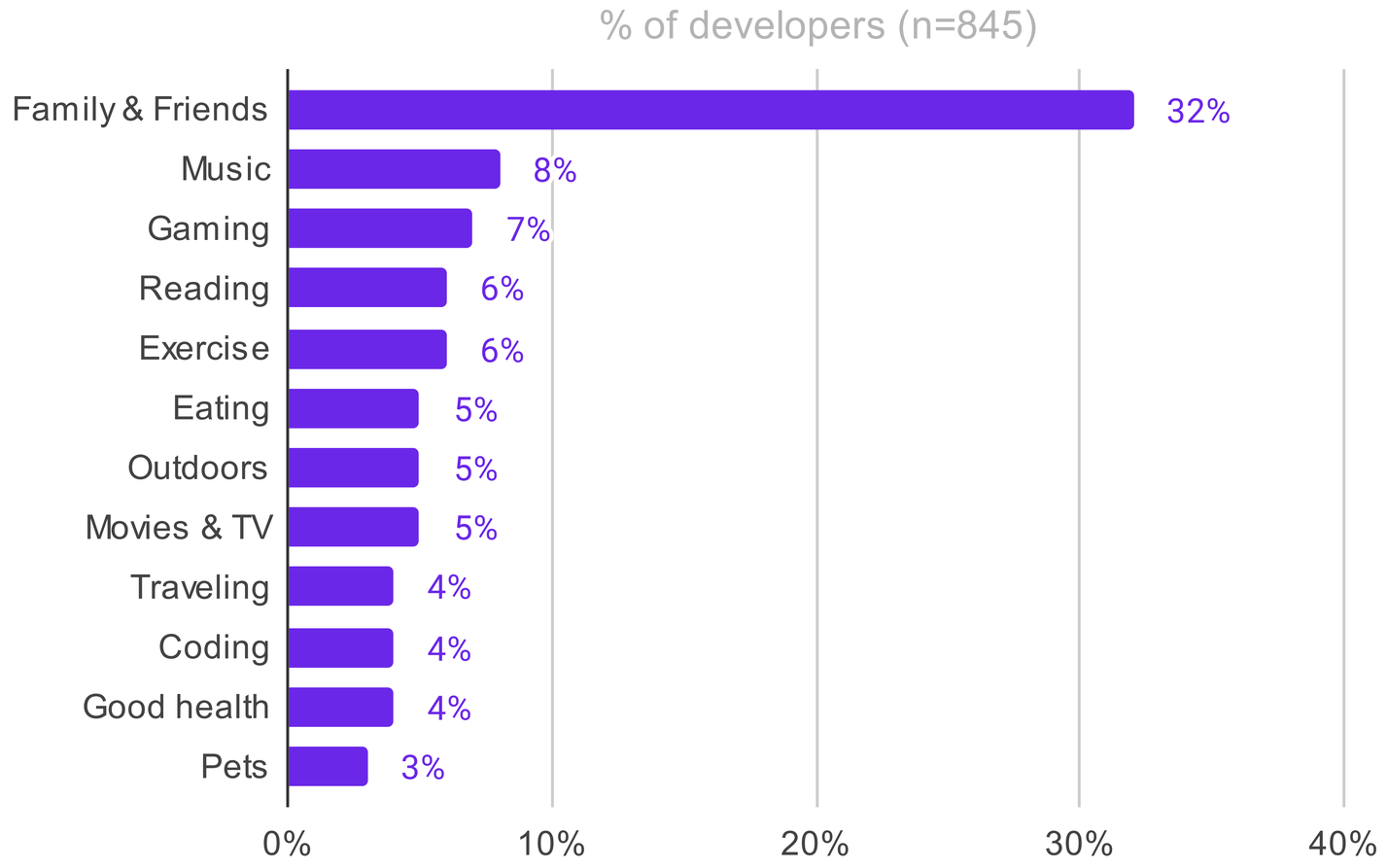
Many survey participants have also shared their thoughts and tips that help them stay healthy in mind and body. In addition, we include several suggestions from fellow developers to take inspiration from.

3.1 So what makes developers happy?

The following graph shows a variety of activities that developers engage with that contribute to their feeling of happiness. For example, 32% of developers responded that “Spending time with Family & Friends” makes them happy, showing the value of work-life balance to ensure developer wellness.



What makes developers happy?

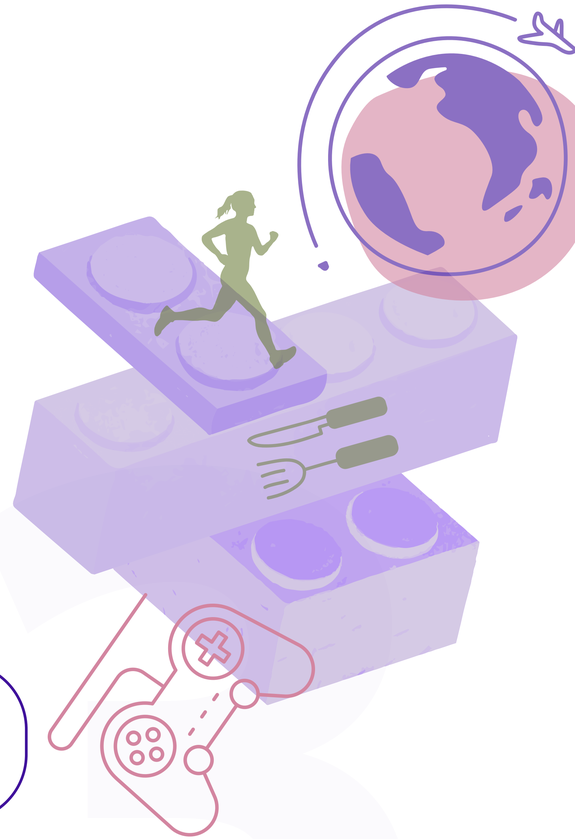


Here are a few selected comments from survey respondents on the same question:

> *Eating good food and travelling with my family (you said besides coding!)*

> *Lego constructions, swimming, walking, playing video games*

> *I like to take a break from coding every now and then when I'm burned out to walk around my neighbourhood, there's always lots of things to keep your attention* 😄

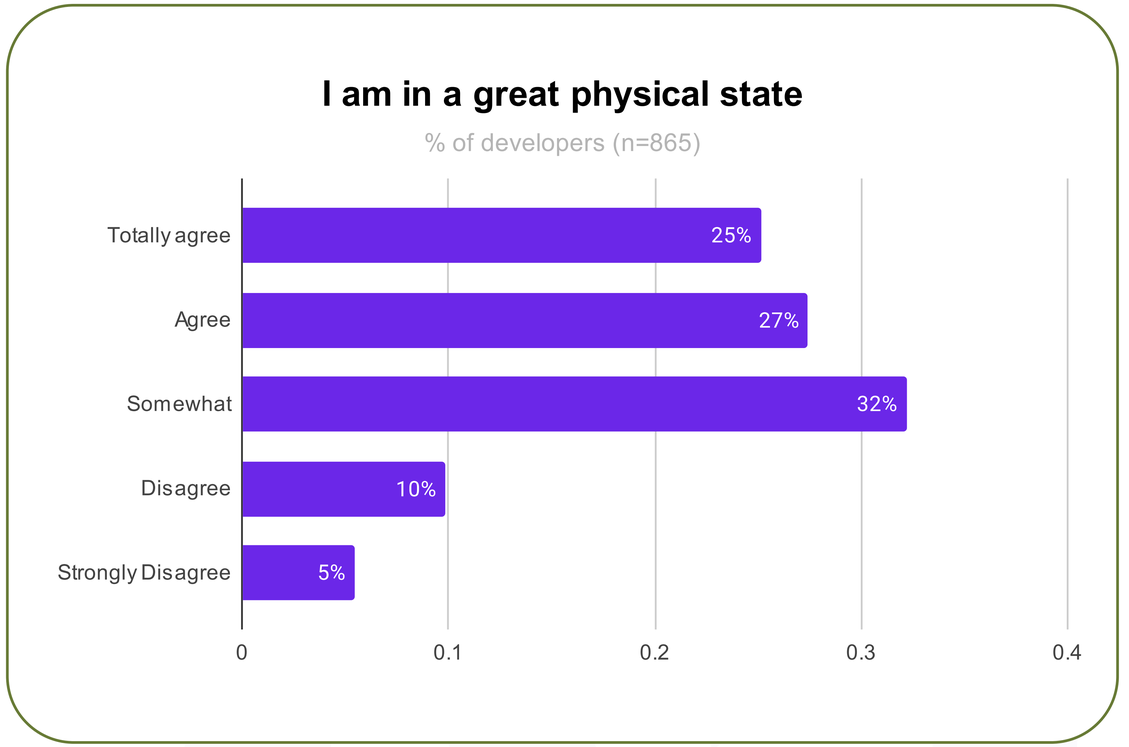


3.2 Physical state

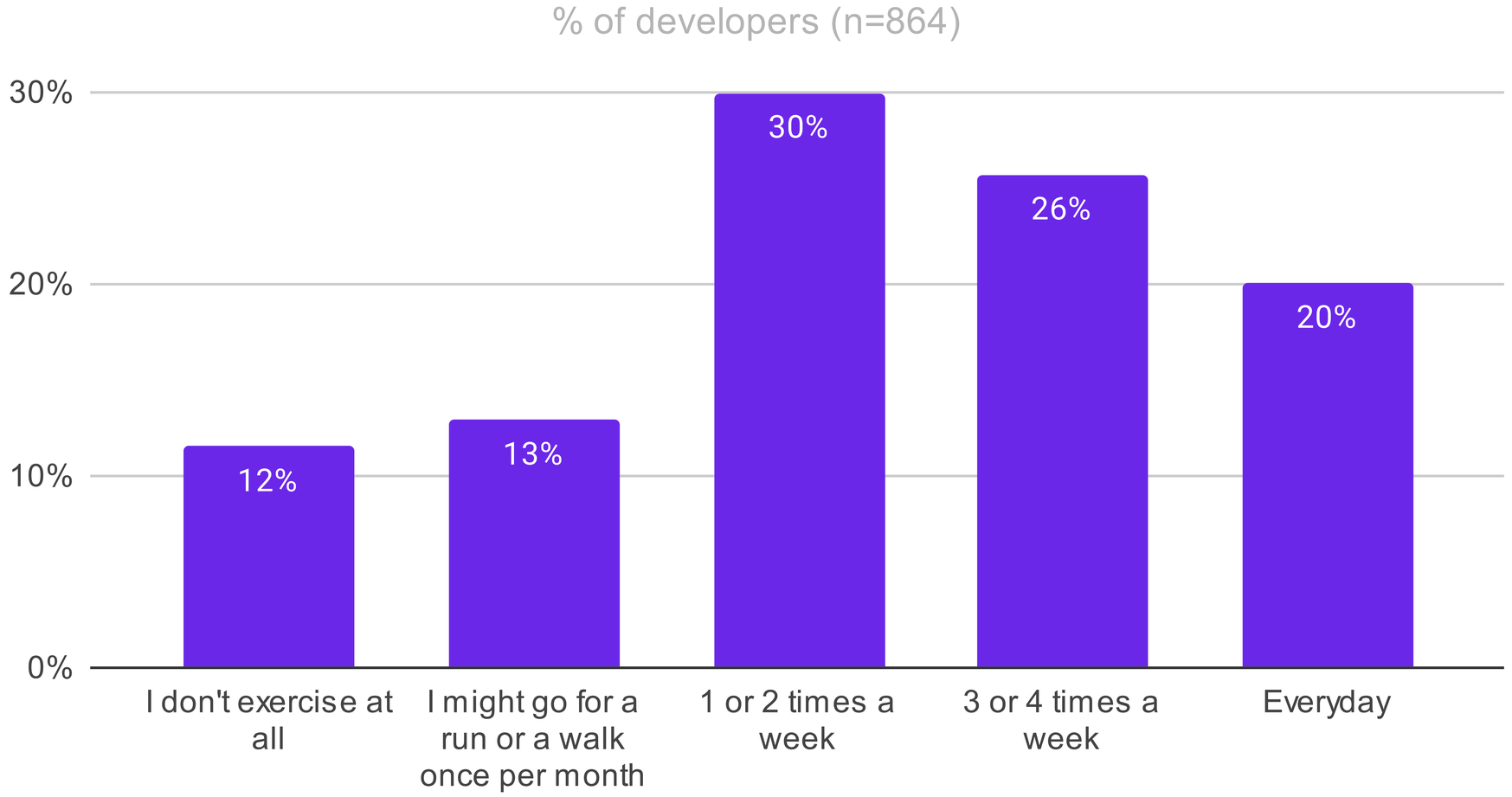
While development is mainly a desk job, the majority of developers (**52%**) agree or strongly agree that they are in a great physical state.

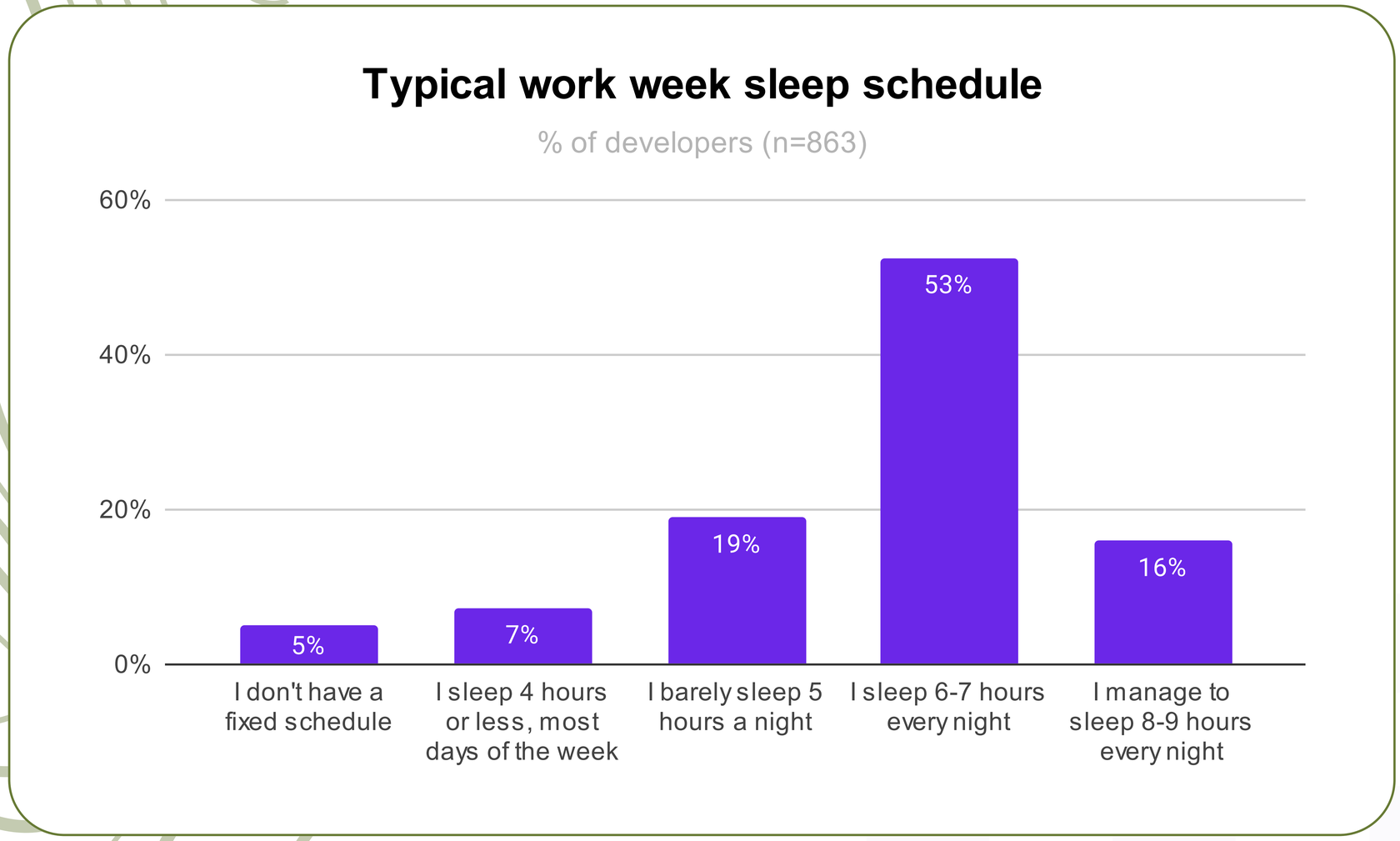
26% of developers work out around 3-4 times a week, which many health professionals recommend. However, **12%** of developers responded that they don't exercise at all, while 13% go for a run or walk only once a month.

About 53% of developers sleep 6-7 hours every night, while 5% of survey participants responded to not having a fixed sleep schedule. Unfortunately, about 19% of developer respondents barely get 5 hours of sleep every night. The recommendation is at least 7 hours of sleep.



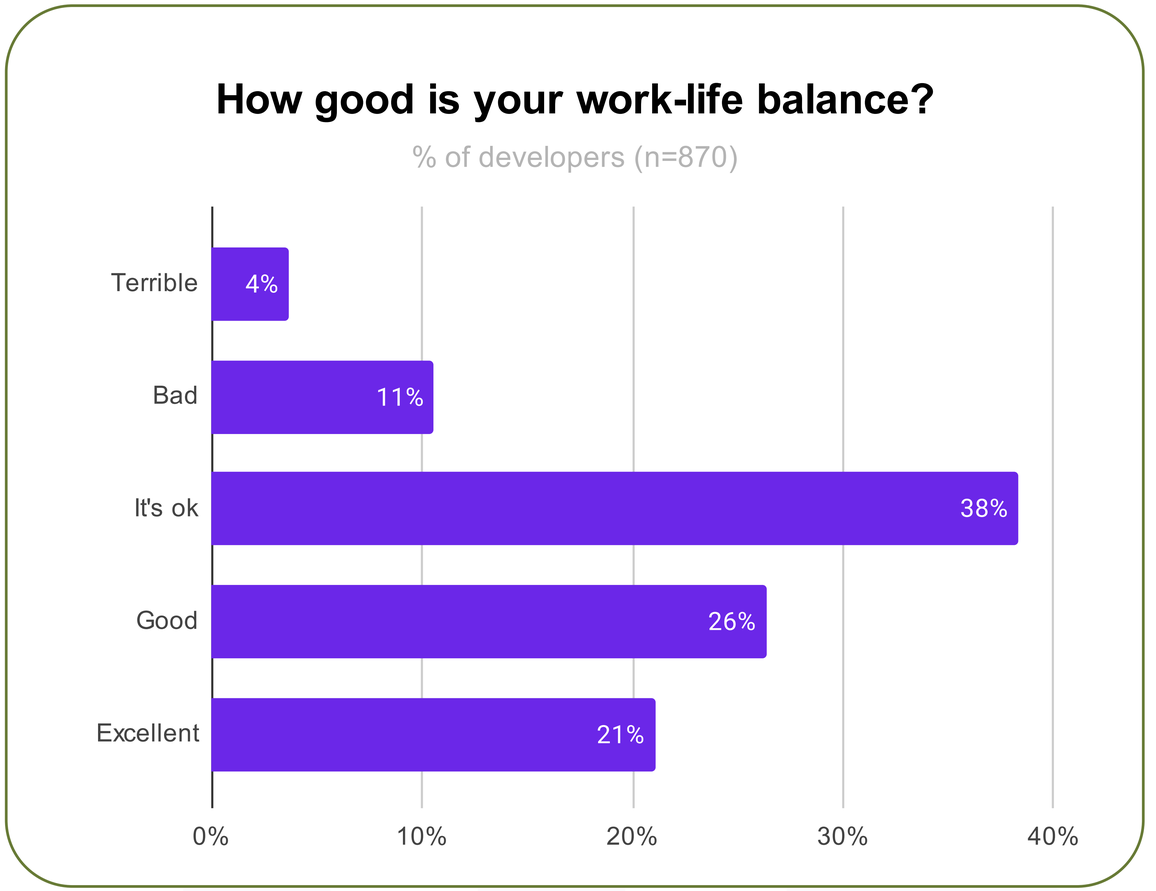
How many times per week do developers exercise?




Typical work week sleep schedule
% of developers (n=863)
60%
40%
20%
0%
5%
7%
19%
53%
16%
I don't have a fixed schedule
I sleep 4 hours or less, most days of the week
I barely sleep 5 hours a night
I sleep 6-7 hours every night
I manage to sleep 8-9 hours every night

3.3 Work-life Balance

Overall, the majority of survey respondents enjoy an acceptable work-life balance. Still, **11%** of developers feel it's bad, while **4%** feel it's terrible. Insufficient work-life balance is often the reason developers look for a job change.



Health/well-being tips from developers

We also asked participants to share their thoughts on well-being. They also shared what worked for them and tips they wanted to put out to ensure the good health and well-being of the entire developer community.

Here are a few interesting ones :

When you start feeling burnout, distracted or care less about your work, try and take a little time off and do what makes you happy or keeps you energised. This helps slot and renews you. When you get back.

Always unwind and focus on relieving stress by doing something fun e.g. going out with friends, be with your loved ones, etc. Our health is our wealth.

Clear boundaries. Work-life balance is a myth, clear priorities in our life is the key, sometimes work will be a priority and sometimes life will be, prioritise.

Don't feel guilty for doing leisure activities which don't contribute to your skills. It's ok to read a non-technical book or play a game if you feel like you need it.

If you don't schedule time to take care of yourself, your body/mind will force you to eventually and the timing won't be up to you.

Wellbeing tips from developers

As developers, we spend too much of our day sitting. You should work out, because not only is it good for your health, but it also relieves your stress. Using too much mental effort can be tiring to your body, and pushing yourself physically can really alleviate that feeling.

Maintaining health/wellbeing is like keeping a car clean. Do a bit every day, then you don't have to spend lots of time weekly.

Keep things in perspective. Ten years later, it is unlikely that what you are doing will still be relevant, so prioritise your well-being if you are going to outlast that time period.





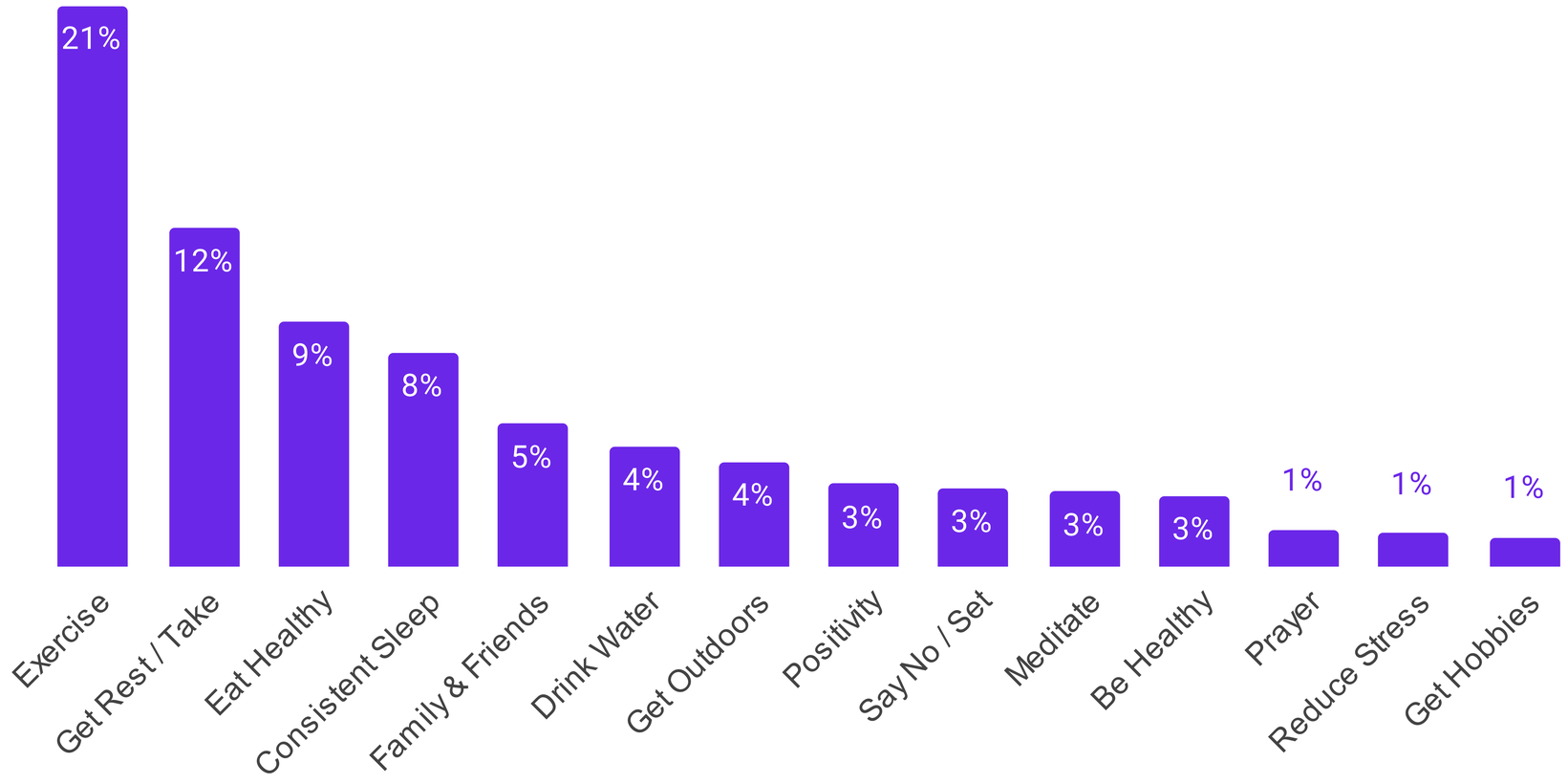




Make time for yourself, to do something that makes you relax or feel at peace. A little "me time" is very beneficial in the long-run.

Health and wellbeing tips from developers

% of developers (n=756)



Methodology

The State of Developer Wellness Survey reached **870** respondents from **91** countries worldwide. The report is based on an online survey designed, produced, and carried out by the Developer Nation Community over two weeks between February and March 2023.

Respondents to the online survey came from 91 countries. The regional distribution of responses is shown in the following chart.

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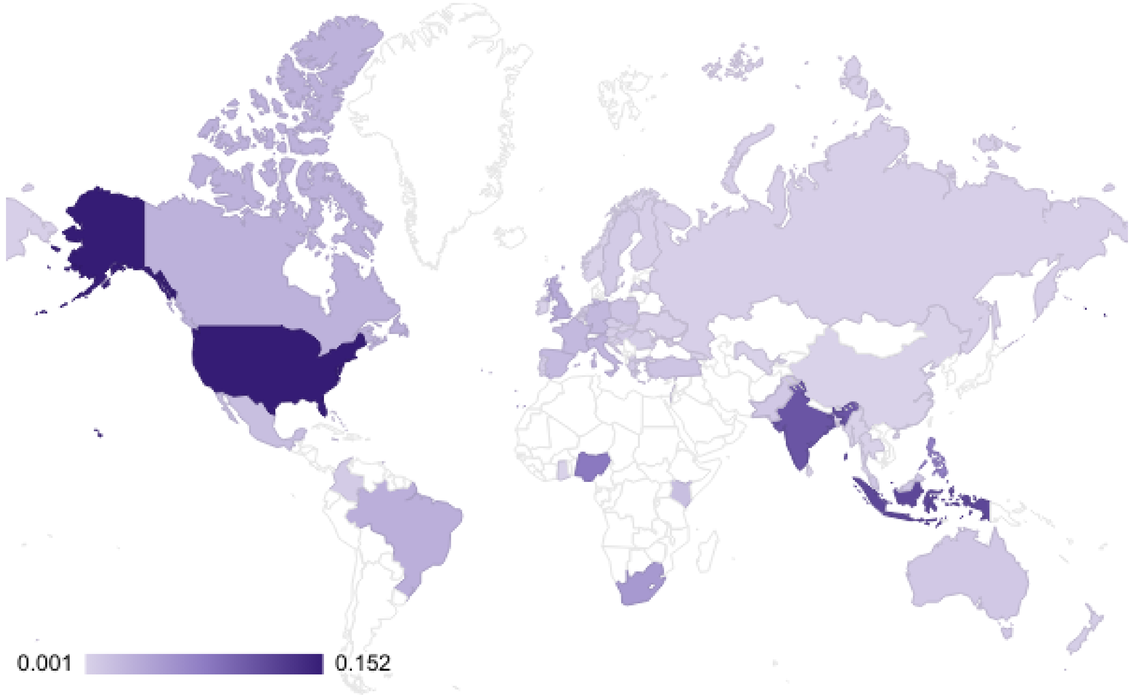
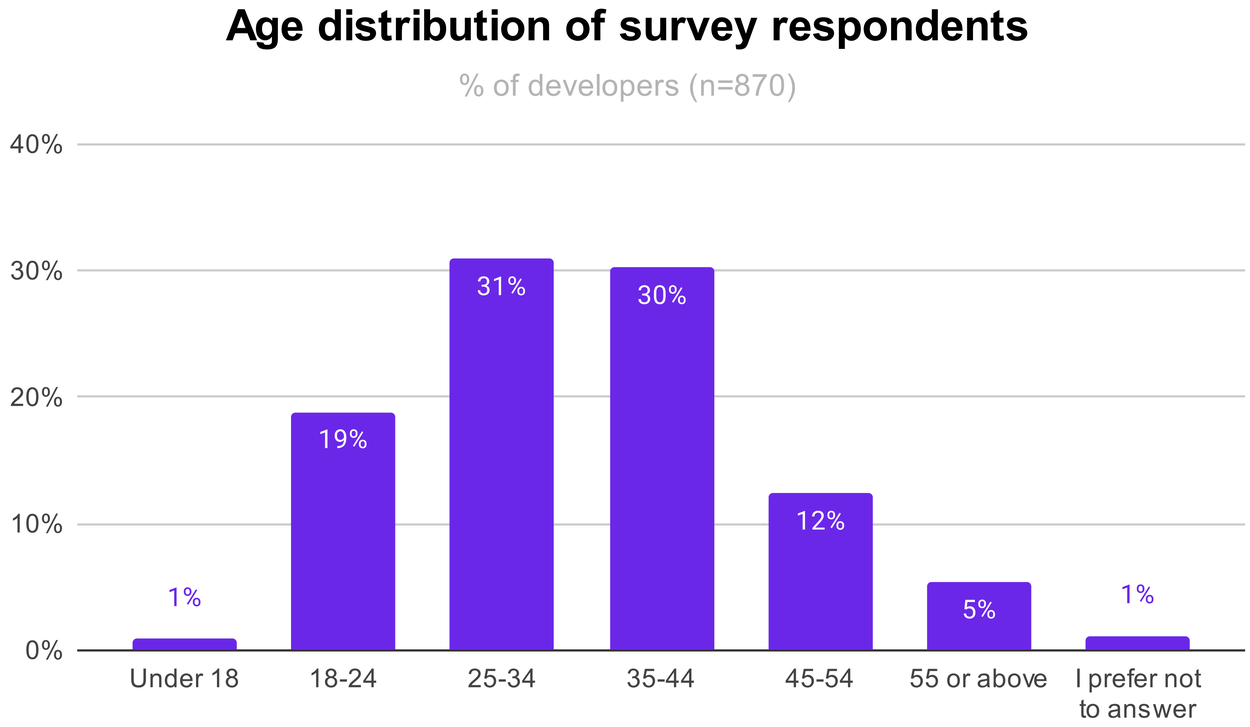


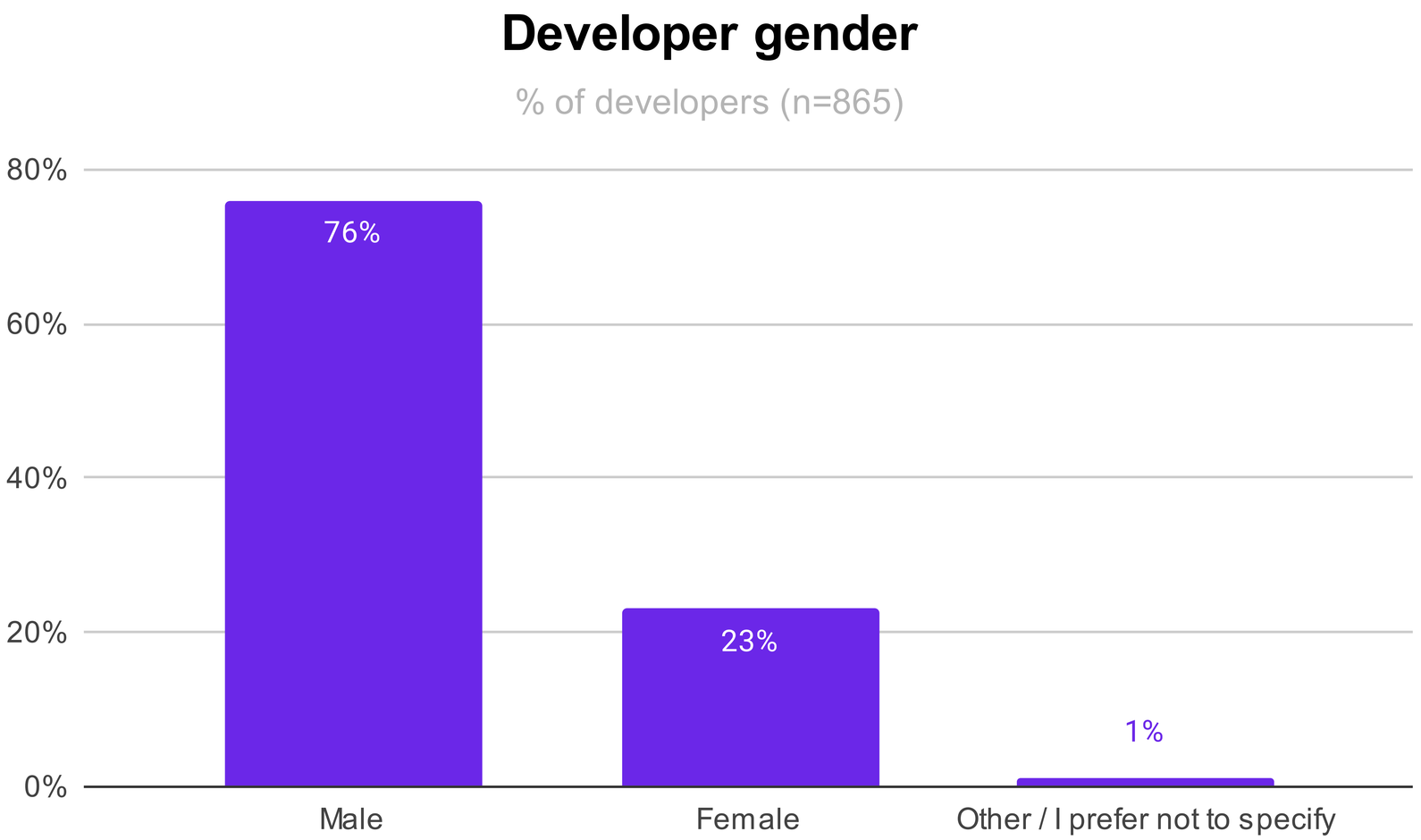
Methodology

Our respondents came from a board age spectrum (18-55+). Excluding those who would rather not answer about their age, the age profile of our respondents is shown below.

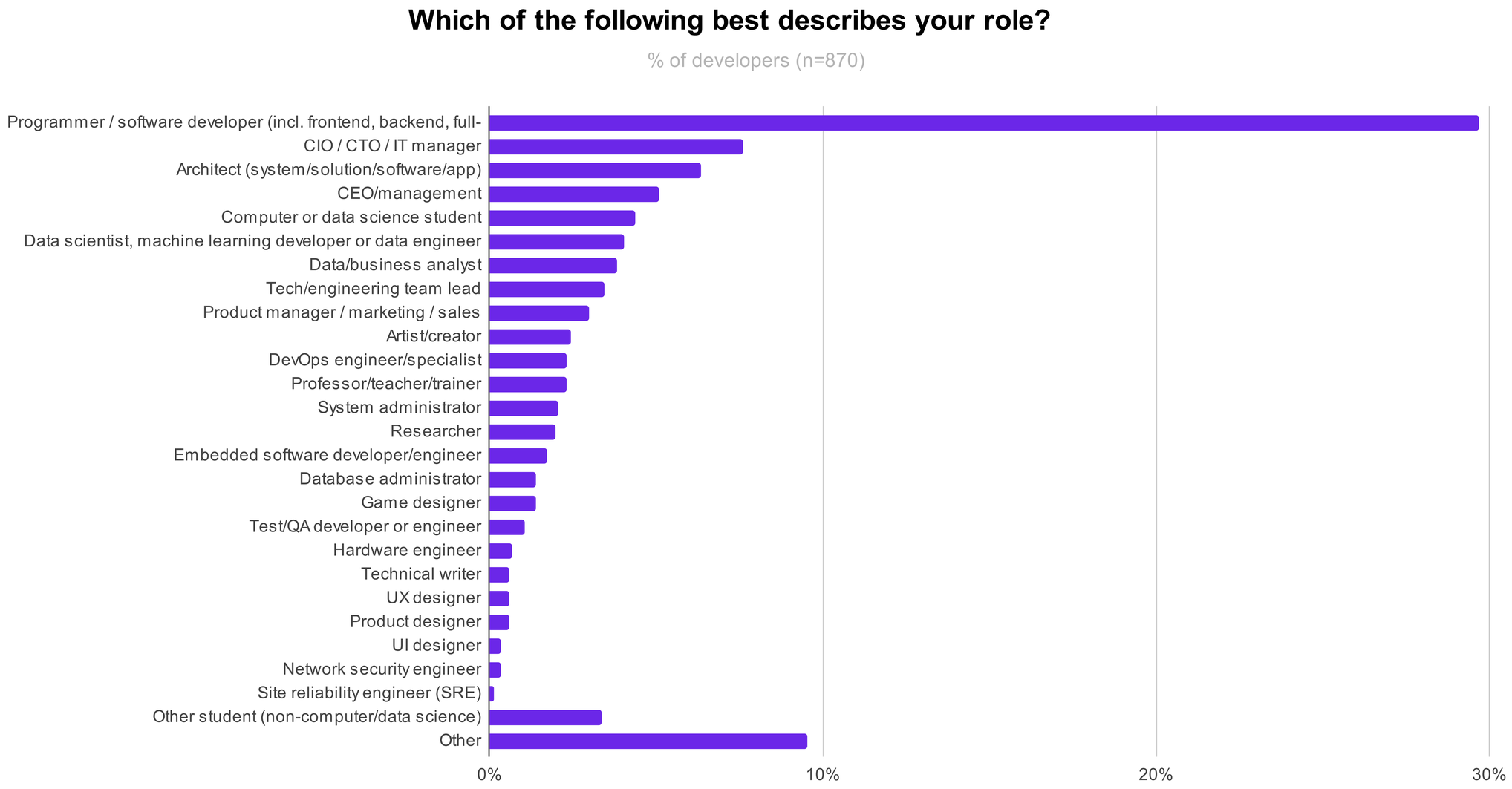
Excluding those who would instead not answer about their age, the age profile of our respondents is shown here.
In the two following graphs, you can see the respondents' development roles and gender.



Methodology



Methodology





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- Tune in to the Developer Nation Broadcast
- Watch tutorials, webinars and workshops
- Join the Developer Research Program, share your thoughts and get access to benefits.
- Spread the word about the mission of the Developer Nation community.
- Contribute content and actively participate in our events and programs.
- Be amongst the leading members of the community and claim an active role in running it.

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