

Marital Status and Living Arrangements

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Men and women are marrying later than ever before.

The estimated median age at first marriage is higher than ever before. In 1994, the median age at first marriage was 26.7 years for men and 24.5 years for women, approximately 3 1/2 years higher than the median age in 1970 (23.2 years for men and 20.8 years for women). Another indication of delayed marriage is the significant increase in the proportion of young adults who have not yet married.

Since 1970, the proportions of men and women who had never married have at least doubled and in some cases tripled for the age groups between 25 and 44 years. For example, the proportion of persons 30 to 34 years old who had never married tripled from 6 to 20 percent for women and from 9 to 30 percent for men between 1970 and 1994. Among persons 35 to 39 years old, the proportions never married doubled

from 5 to 13 percent for women and tripled from 7 to 19 percent for men, during this period.

One in every nine adults lives alone.

In 1994, 23.6 million persons lived alone or 12 percent of all adults. While women accounted for the larger share of persons living alone in 1994 (6 of 10), the number of men living alone increased at a faster pace. Between 1970 and 1994, the number of women living alone increased 94 percent (from 7.3 to 14.2 million). During the same period, there was a 167 percent increase in the number of men living alone (from 3.5 to 9.4 million).

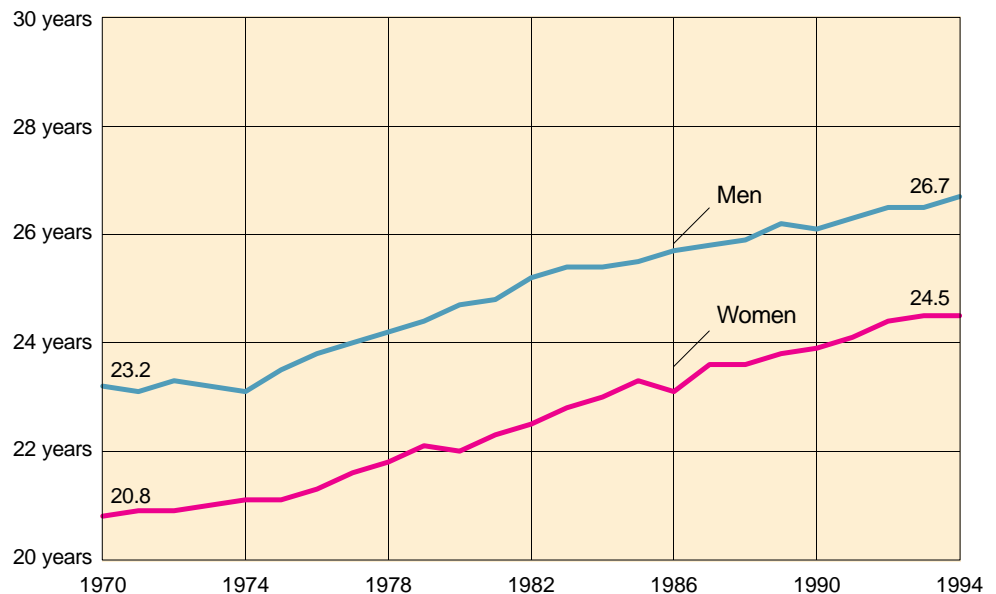
Living alone is more common among the elderly, especially among women. Of adults under 35 years old, only 5 percent of women and 7 percent of men lived alone in 1994. For persons 75 years old and over, the proportion living alone was 52 percent for

women and 21 percent for men. Since 1970, there has been virtually no change in the proportion of elderly men living alone, while the proportion of elderly women living alone has grown significantly (from 19 to 21 percent for men and from 37 to 52 percent for women between 1970 and 1994).

There has been a sevenfold increase in unmarried-couple households since 1970.

An unmarried-couple household is composed of two unrelated adults of the opposite sex (one of whom is the householder) who share a housing unit with or without the presence of children under 15 years old. The count of unmarried-couple households is intended mainly to estimate the number of cohabiting couples, but it may also include households with a roommate, boarder, or paid employee of the opposite sex.

Estimated Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex: 1970 to 1994



Since 1970, the number of unmarried-couple households has grown from 523,000 to 3.7 million in 1994. There were 7 unmarried couples for every 100 married couples in 1994, compared with only 1 for every 100 in 1970. About one-third had children under 15 years old present in the home.

The number of children living with never-married parents is on the rise.

Children living with one parent (18.6 million) represented 27 percent of all children under 18 years old in 1994, up from 12 percent in 1970. The majority lived with their mother, but an increasing proportion lived with their father. In 1994, 12 percent of the children in a one-parent situation lived with their father, up from 9 percent in 1970.

Of the children who lived with one parent, the proportion who lived with a parent who has never married has grown by one-half in the past decade (from 24 to 36 percent), while the proportion who lived with a divorced parent has declined (from 42 to 37 percent). In 1983, a child in a one-parent situation was almost twice as likely to be living with a divorced parent as with a never-married parent; whereas today, the child is just as likely to be living with a divorced parent as with a never-married parent (37 percent compared with 36 percent, respectively). The proportion of children living with a separated parent decreased from 23 to 18 percent between 1983 and 1994, and the proportion living with a widowed parent decreased from 8 to 4 percent.

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports, Series P20-484, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1994*, forthcoming.

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Percent of Adults Living Alone, by Age and Sex: 1970 and 1994

■ 1994
■ 1970

