



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***More single people over thirty***

The number of single people older than thirty rose by 14% between 1995 and 2000. The number of younger single people fell in this period, according to figures from Statistics Netherlands.

### ***Relationship break-ups push up number of single people***

On 1 January 2000 there were 1.8 million single people aged thirty years or older in the Netherlands. Half of the increase in singles between 1995 and 2000 can be attributed to the increase in the population aged thirty or older. The other half is accounted for by the larger proportion of over thirties who live alone.

The strongest increase in the proportion of people living alone occurred among people in their forties. One important factor in this respect is the break-up of unmarried couples. This group, which has been increasing in size in recent years, has a higher risk of breaking off their relationship than married couples, thus pushing up the number single people.

Most people live alone after a time after coming out of a relationship. In most cases this is only a temporary state: two-thirds of separated people have a new partner within five years.

The increase in the number of single people is larger for men than for women. One reason for this is that after a divorce children more often stay with their mothers.

### ***More elderly single people***

The number of people aged 85 and older living alone rose by one quarter between 1995 and 2000. Half of this increase is caused by the trend that fewer older people move to homes for the elderly. In 1995, 38% of people aged 85 and older lived in a home. In 2000 this had fallen to 31%.

The other half of the higher number of elderly single people is the result of the ageing population.

There are by far more single women than men in the elderly age groups: women live about five years longer than men on the one hand, and they are usually married to a man a few years older on the other. This age group therefore comprises many widows.

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### ***Smaller number of young singles***

The number of single people in their twenties fell by 7% between 1995 and 2000. This is caused by the smaller number of people in this age group resulting from the drop in the number of births in the seventies. The proportion of single people in this age group has risen though. More and more young people opt for a time alone after leaving their parents. Ultimately, most people will live together with a partner, mostly without being married for a time. Later, when they start a family, most of these couples will marry.

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