

Motivators and barriers to exercise in older adults

Eva Kemps¹ and Rachel Newson²

¹Flinders University

²Erasmus Medical Centre, The Netherlands



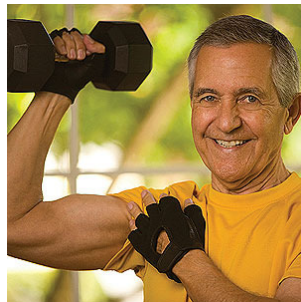
inspiring achievement



Exercise



Any physical activity that involves active bodily exertion



Exercise is beneficial to

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Cognitive vitality

Exercise and cognitive ageing

- Cross-sectional research
 - Physically active older adults performed better on tasks of attention, memory and processing speed (Newson & Kemps, 2008)
- Longitudinal research
 - Older adults who lead an active lifestyle showed slower rates of decline in memory and processing speed 6 years later (Newson & Kemps, 2005)

Exercise in older adults

- Many older adults do not exercise regularly
- Exercise engagement declines with age

Our study (Newson & Kemp, 2007)

Aimed to determine why older adults do or do not
exercise

Participants

- 217 older adults
- 96 men and 121 women
- 63-86 years old
- 12 ½ years of education
- 1+ hour of modest exercise per week

Motivation to exercise

e.g. *I exercise to stay in shape*

1 = not at all

2 = rarely

3 = occasionally

4 = often

5 = always

Barriers to exercise

e.g. *Fear of injury*

1 = not at all

2 = rarely

3 = occasionally

4 = often

5 = always

Motivators to exercise

1. I want to be physically fit
2. I want to improve my fitness
3. I want to stay in shape
4. I exercise for health concerns
5. Exercising makes me feel good

Barriers to exercise

1. Physical ailment
2. Painful joints
3. Adverse weather conditions
4. Having a limiting health/physical condition
5. Lack of energy

Factors that promote exercise

1. Fitness

e.g. *I want to stay in shape*

2. Engagement

e.g. *I like to have something to do*

3. Challenge

e.g. *I like to be competitive*

4. Health

e.g. *I exercise because a health professional advised me to*

Factors that prevent exercise

1. Medical
e.g. *Painful joints*
2. Concern
e.g. *Fear of falling*
3. Situational
e.g. *Having no one to exercise with*
4. Facilities/knowledge
e.g. *Lack of exercise facilities in the area*

Motivators

1. Fitness
2. Engagement
3. Challenge
4. Health

Barriers

1. Medical
2. Concern
3. Situational
4. Facilities/knowledge

Motivators

1. Fitness
2. Engagement
older adults
3. Challenge
4. Health

Barriers

1. Medical
older adults
2. Concern
3. Situational
4. Facilities/knowledge

Motivators

1. Fitness
2. Engagement
3. Challenge
men
4. Health
women

Barriers

1. Medical
2. Concern
women
3. Situational
4. Facilities/knowledge
men

Motivators

1. Fitness
high-level exercisers
2. Engagement
3. Challenge
high-level exercisers
4. Health

Barriers

1. Medical
low-level exercisers
2. Concern
3. Situational
4. Facilities/knowledge
low-level exercisers

Conclusion

- Older adults are generally motivated to exercise, but experience certain barriers
- Addressing factors that prevent exercise engagement in older adults has important physical, psychological and socio-economic implications