

Title of Intervention and Website: Exercise adherence in middle-aged men and women

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Individual Education, Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To enhance exercise adherence in sedentary middle-aged males and females

Population: Sedentary, middle-aged, adult men and women

Setting: Community-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

The intervention lasted for 20 weeks. Participants were randomized into intervention and control groups. The intervention group attended adherence meetings and exercise meetings while the control group attended exercise meetings and control meetings.

- **Group Education:** A 20-week exercise program was led by leaders with advanced degrees in physiology. The sessions focused on low-impact aerobic exercises like walking. The class consisted of a warm-up period, aerobic activity period and a cool-down phase. Participants were also led in stretching, flexibility, and muscular endurance exercises. Participants attended six bi-weekly meetings. Meetings focused on progress that the participants had made. At the meetings, social modeling information was provided in the form of videotapes of individuals with similar characteristics. The control group also attended group sessions that consisted of lectures, handouts, videos, and question and answer periods.
- **Individual Education:** Group meetings were followed up with booster letters given to the participants to reinforce the primary information presented at the previous session. Participants were provided with information regarding how the physiological system responds to exercise stress.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Social persuasion was employed at the group meetings by virtue of forming “buddy groups” of two or three participants. The groups were instructed to exercise with each other, provide assistance and encouragement, and help partners through times of potential difficulty.

Theory: Social modeling, Social persuasion, Self-efficacy theory

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** group leaders and staff to prepare materials
- **Training:** not mentioned
- **Technology:** computer, printer and audio-visual equipment
- **Space:** classroom, walking and gym space
- **Budget:** not mentioned
- **Intervention:** video tapes, informational materials and handouts
- **Evaluation:** attendance sheets, participant diaries/logs, adherence efficacy questionnaire and statistical software

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Randomized control trial
- **Methods and Measures:** Program attendance was assessed by measuring the frequency, duration and distance of walks/exercise. The frequency was measured by using attendance logs that were kept by the exercise leaders. Patients kept diaries where they logged frequency, duration and distance traveled. Exercise-related self-efficacy was assessed by a measure of adherence efficacy consisting of 10 items reflecting participants’ beliefs in their ability to continue to exercise on a regular basis. This survey was administered at baseline and every other week during the intervention.

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** not mentioned

- **Long Term Impact:** The intervention group adhered significantly better to the exercise program, spending more time engaged in exercise and walking greater distances than their control group counterparts.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: A simple information-based intervention program can significantly improve adherence patterns in previously sedentary middle-aged males and females.

Citation(s):

McAuley, E., K. S. Courneya, et al. (1994). "Enhancing exercise adherence in middle-aged males and females." *Prev Med* 23(4): 498-506.