



Lift, Run, and/or Stretch: The Decision Making Process of Exercise Choice and Exercise Duration

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Research Question

How do full time undergraduate students of different gender identities at the University of Dayton describe their internal decision making process when choosing a specific exercise and its duration in regards to strength, cardio, and stretching activities at the RecPlex?

Significance of Study

There seems to be limited research exploring how full time undergraduate students describe their decision making process of exercise choices and duration within a collegiate recreation center.

Key Quotations

- I've had this preconceived notion that *I'm not supposed to be over there...* I'm not an expert at it... *I have to know what I'm doing in order to use the weights.*"
- "...*whoever I come with* wants to do something else, *then I will change my mind.*"
- *"The fact that I know the scientific facts makes me feel more confident."*
- *"Running is more of a liberating kind of feeling"*
- *I didn't probably stretch as much in high school...it's not that important to me."*
- "Once you kind of *lose that cardio shape...* turning to **strength training, I didn't want to be burning the muscle that I was developing.**"

Implications for Practice/Recommendations

- Encourage the planning of all three activity types and their recommended durations when exercising alone or with peers
- Modify and create one-stop shop fitness spaces that offers all three types of activities throughout the RecPlex
- Provide more on-site exercise educational programs as opportunities for everyone, especially women, to gain knowledge and confidence about doing strength activities in various fitness environments
- Encourage mindsets during the exercise experience to be free of judgments and comparisons when in community
- Promote prior stretching before cardio/strength activities

Select References

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Abstract

Campus recreation environments have been shown to promote physical health and wellbeing for students and overall student success. Previous institutional data has shown various differences in exercise choices and durations amongst undergraduate men and women. A greater understanding of these choices can inform those who work in various health and wellness professions to design strategies equipped for student success balancing all three types of activities.

3 Types of Exercise Choices



Strength (resistance, anaerobic) activities- *a health component of physical fitness that is the ability of a muscle or muscle group to exert force*



Cardio (aerobic) activities- *activities in which the body's large muscles move in a rhythmic manner for a sustained period of time...such as walking, running, swimming and biking*



Stretching (flexibility) activities- *a health and performance related component of physical fitness that is the range of motion at a joint*



Previous experience and overall knowledge of doing an activity and how it will make them feel afterwards, regardless of its type- *physical and psychological satisfaction (body image, tiredness, stress relief, escapism/clear mind), high school sports / P.E. class, recreation, internet/book research*

Location of Friends/Other Exercisers: Friends and/or other exercisers within an activity space had an influence of choosing to do specific types of activities or not based on perceived environment (*facility space, availability of equipment, peer influence, competitive nature, lack of perceived ability, perceived gender of exercisers, desire for isolationism*)

Sporadic v. Planned: Those who planned exercise decisions verses a spontaneous decision made decisions to likely do strength activities over cardio and/or flexibility activities



Research Methodology

Guided by Creswell (2007)

Methodology: Qualitative Phenomenology (transcendental)

Participants: Seven, full time undergraduate students (four self-identified men, three self-identified women) who used the RecPlex 15 times over a semester.