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Peter K. Twining

The University of Vermont

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Resources for staying active during the COVID-19 pandemic

Peter Twining, MS3
Ridgefield Primary Care
February 2021
Mentor: Dr. Nick Florio

Problem Identification and Description of Need

- ▶ **Problem:** Staying active during the COVID-19 pandemic is challenging for many people as gyms are closed and sporting activities are canceled.
 - ▶ There are likely many reasons for why people have difficulty getting the suggested amounts of exercise, but reduced access to gyms is likely a cause of reduced activity during COVID.
 - ▶ The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of high intensity exercise per week for optimal heart health. ¹
- ▶ **Description of need:** There are many ways to stay active and get the suggested amounts of exercise at home, and many patients may be unaware of these resources.

Public Health Cost

- ▶ The health benefits of adequate exercise are well studied and can help lower the risk of many diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and hypertension - diseases also well known to be of a significant public health cost. ¹
- ▶ As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches on, many community members continue to struggle to get adequate exercise.
- ▶ In communities across the world, the amount of exercise people are getting has decreased through the pandemic. ²
- ▶ A recent study of adults in New Zealand found that less than 50% of adults were able to maintain their usual level of physical activity during the pandemic, primarily due to closure of their gym facilities. ³

Community Perspective

- ▶ Takeaways from interviews with two Primary Care Physicians at Ridgefield Primary Care:
 - ▶ The pandemic presents a unique opportunity to create good exercise habits because many people have more time.
 - ▶ Even taking a few minutes for quick exercises at a desk here and there throughout a busy day can make a difference.
 - ▶ Most patients at the practice are exercising less as they cannot make it to the gym.
 - ▶ However, there is a small group that is exercising more now that they have more time.
 - ▶ Not knowing what exercises to do at home is a barrier to exercise.

Intervention and Methodology

- ▶ I created a pamphlet with resources to help patients learn to exercise at home.
 - ▶ I included several free apps with workout programs and videos.
 - ▶ I used QR codes to provide links for YouTube channels with home exercise videos for a variety of different types of exercise, from yoga to plyometrics, to interval training.
 - ▶ I provided a link for quick exercises that can be performed at a desk, for busy individuals who cannot find the time to set aside for exercise.

Staying active can be difficult during COVID

Gyms are closed, our routines are changed, but now is great opportunity to start exercising at home.

Benefits of exercise:

- Reduce stress
- Improve sleep
- Lower blood pressure
- Improve memory
- Decrease cholesterol ¹

"The human body is the only machine that breaks down when not used."
- Dr. Thomas Cureton



*Photo credit: "Dumbbells for sale" by forced rhabarb is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The CDC and American Heart Association recommend:

- 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a week OR...
- 75 minutes of high intensity exercise a week AND...
- 2 days a week of activity that makes your muscles work harder than usual

Having trouble staying active with a busy lifestyle?

- Taking just a few minutes to move around throughout the day is better than nothing. Below is a link with some ideas. ²



*Photo credit: "Running on a treadmill" by eceowebell is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Remember to always ask your doctor before starting a new fitness routine.

References:

1. American Heart Association
2. American Council on Exercise:
3. [Orthoinfo](#) - American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons



STAYING ACTIVE DURING COVID-19

Photo credit: "Dead Sea Yoga" by TheBerk is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Free Apps for Home Workouts

Nike Training Club

- Includes many home workouts including yoga, cardio, weight training, and HIIT.

Daily Workouts Fitness Trainer

- Great option for beginners with home workouts from 5 to 30 minutes.

Seven – 7 Minute Workout

- Great for those who can't find the time to work out.

My Fitness Pal

- This is a great app for tracking what you eat to help you keep a healthy diet.

There are many more excellent free and paid apps and websites for home workouts, these are just a few of the popular options.

Other Free Online Resources

Yoga with Adriene – yoga videos



Men's Health UK – Variety of workout videos and plans



POPSUGAR – variety of workout videos



Caroline Girvan – 10-week fitness programs



Scan QR codes with your phone's camera for links.

Results and Response

- ▶ The pamphlet was supplied to Ridgefield Primary Care for distribution to patients who are exercising less due to difficulty exercising at home.
- ▶ The physicians at Ridgefield Primary Care thought this resource would be useful for their patients.
- ▶ Additional assessments would be needed for quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the pamphlet.

Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- ▶ To monitor effectiveness, a quantitative survey or interviews would have to be conducted with patients before and after distribution of the pamphlet.
 - ▶ Due to the short time span of this project, robust evaluation of the effectiveness was not performed.
 - ▶ All patients have different goals and interests regarding physical activity, and while there are almost endless online resources available, only a few were included in the pamphlet.

Recommendations for Future Projects

- ▶ Survey patients at a single primary care office, or multiple offices across UVM's clinical campuses, to assess how physical activity has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Survey patients on their reasons for altered physical activity during the pandemic to determine what the major barriers are.
- ▶ Assess the effectiveness of various interventions, including this pamphlet, on patients' physical activity levels.

References

- ▶ 1. American Heart Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults and Kids. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults>
- ▶ 2. Chambonniere PSC, Lambert C, Fearnbach N, Tardieu M, Fillon A, Genin P, Larras B, Melsens P, Bois J, Pereira B, Tremblay A, Thivel D, Duclos M. Effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviors in French Children and Adolescents: new results from the ONAPS national survey. *Eur J Integr Med.* 2021 Feb 9;101308. doi: 10.1016/j.eujim.2021.101308. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33584872; PMCID: PMC7871771
- ▶ 3. Meiring RM, Gusso S, McCullough E, Bradnam L. The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic Movement Restrictions on Self-Reported Physical Activity and Health in New Zealand: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2021 Feb 10;18(4):1719. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18041719. PMID: 33578964.
- ▶ 4. American Council on Exercise: How to Keep Moving During Covid-19: <https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/7499/how-to-keep-moving-during-covid-19/>