

Project Report

Back to Basics

Fitness & Well-being

Prepared for:

The Kellogg's Rural Leaders Programme 2009

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
The main conclusions drawn are that:	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
RESEARCH QUESTION	4
INTRODUCTION	5
OBJECTIVES	5
LIMITATIONS	6
THE FITNESS CHALLENGE PROGRAMME	6
FITNESS PROGRAMME RESULTS	6
Participant's stories about their exercise journey	6
THE SURVEY	8
ANALYSIS PROCESS	8
THE SAMPLE	8
Participant's stories from the Fitness Challenge Questionnaire	14
CONCLUSIONS	14
Limitations to the survey	15
EXERCISE RESEARCH	15
Key barriers to exercising	15
Key Motivators to exercising	15
Advantages of Exercising	15
Exercise Tips from Dr Heste Henning	16
How to start an exercise programme	16
Top Tips to help you exercise	16
MY STORY	17
REFERENCES	19
APPENDICES	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exercise is important for all women of all ages and it should be an integral part of your life. A number of women were surveyed or received a Fitness Challenge Programme for 2009 on their exercise regime. I wanted to find out what exercise women were involved in and what motivated them to exercise. This project endeavoured to ascertain if women in the rural setting get fit and maintain a fitness level without having to pay exorbitant amounts to attend gyms, this includes travel and time costs to get there? Results from the surveys were surprising positive. However there were limitations to the survey.

I have talked about my journey during the year and the positive outcome for me personally. It has taken a while and I feel my journey is just beginning particularly when you haven't exercised for a number of years. It does take a while to get into the routine to make it part of your life style. I found that it is important to have goals to work towards, in order to achieve. I found that healthy and eating and exercise goes hand in hand.

Project Objectives:

- To establish if it is possible for women in the rural setting to get fit and maintain this level without having to pay exorbitant amounts to attend gyms, this includes travel and time costs to get there.

In preparing my survey, I had the following specific objectives:

1. To establish how often women exercised?
2. What type of exercise women were involved in?
3. What motivated women to exercise?

With this information, I wanted to encourage and inspire women to become more active and encourage a sense of well-being and fitness, in their lives. A number of articles, books, pamphlets, discussions with women, and a top international netball and basketball player were used as resources to help with the project.

The main conclusions drawn are that:

1. It is possible for women to exercise regularly in a rural setting even though they lead hectic lives with pressing time and family commitments.
2. Women need to be well motivated and have the drive and determination to make exercise a priority.
3. Rural women are involved in voluntary community work, also paid employment and working on the farm.
4. Women don't need to go to the gym or employ personal trainers to achieve a fitness level that makes them fit and healthy.
5. Those women that had been exercising for years had always done so and continue to do regardless of family commitments and time constraints.

The recommendations are:

1. Know the benefits and advantages of exercise.
2. Make exercise a priority and part of your lifestyle.
3. Set goals.
4. Be consistent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people who have assisted me in the preparation of the project. Every project is a collaborative effort and several people have helped in various ways.

My husband John and my five children who have tolerated my late night work habits and put up with a lot of disruption to our family life, which have allowed me time to complete the Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme and this project. Their patience and support have been greatly appreciated. My daughter Kate (13) completed the graphs. My sister Kaylene Dwyer, BA Education completed the typing and formatting of the final copy.

I wish to thank Rural Women New Zealand through the Meat & Wool Board New Zealand who has very kindly sponsored this course. Also, Alliance Group who kindly contributed to my course expenses and research costs.

I also wish to thank the participants who submitted their stories.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Can women in the rural setting get fit and maintain a fitness level without having to pay exorbitant amounts to attend gyms, this includes travel and time costs to get there?

INTRODUCTION

Living in a rural setting has its limitations and barriers such as; travel, lack of excuses and no gym. Rural women face a number of challenges in living in rural New Zealand. It is important that women be in the best health because they usually bear the responsibility of caring for each other, partners and children. Maintaining or obtaining good levels of physical activity contributes to good health: mentally, physically, socially and spiritually.

I chose to look at whether it was possible to get fit and maintain a fitness level without having to go to a gym, fitness class or have a personal paid trainer.

Firstly, I decided to collate a number of fitness programmes. These are freely available from a number of sources. The sources I have used for the research are: ODT Fitness Programme by Gary Dawkins, Fitness trainer, Fitness Programmes from Next Magazine and Dr J Tickell's The Great Australian Diet. This information was sent to 8 to 9 friends and relations, requiring response and feedback. I wanted to share this information with a number of friends throughout New Zealand, in the hope they would become motivated and enthusiastic about their fitness and well being. These programmes if not used now will be a good resource for when the timing is right. I wanted women who were my age in their 40's and had children still at school, primary or secondary school. The women needed to be self motivated and to gain the benefits of exercise.

There was a limited response from the fitness challenge programme. The initial programme set out did not answer the proposed question. This required me to revisit what I was doing. I decided I needed find a more simplistic method of obtaining information about fitness and well-being from rural women. I also needed to more narrowly define the research. I elected to complete a fitness questionnaire to obtain data about what women were currently doing in the line of fitness and exercise, in the area I live. I have included a section with a number of women's stories about their fitness journey.

I have talked about my journey during the year and the positive outcome for me personally. It has taken a while and I feel my journey is just beginning particularly when you haven't exercised for a number of years.

In this project healthy eating is not a focus. However, Gary Dawkins Programme's includes healthy eating options and we all know the importance of healthy eating. Some important healthy concepts are included in his programme.

OBJECTIVES

- To establish if it is possible for women in the rural setting to get fit and maintain this level without having to pay exorbitant amounts to attend gyms, this includes travel and time costs to get there.

In preparing my survey (see appendix A) I had the following specific objectives:

1. To establish how often women exercised?
2. What type of exercise women were involved in?
3. What motivated women to exercise?

With this information, I wanted to encourage and inspire women to become more active and encourage a sense of well-being and fitness, in their lives. A number of articles, books, pamphlets, discussions with women, and a top international netball and basketball player were used as resources to help with the project.

LIMITATIONS

I have limited report writing experience. I have undertaken this research project for my Kellogg Rural Leadership course as a challenge to extend my skills and to offer some information in an area I have become passionate about. I am particularly passionate and concerned about the needs of rural women, as they are often isolated. I have used this project (Fitness and Well-being) as vehicle to inspire women to ensure that they are fit and healthy.

THE FITNESS CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

I sent out a letter titled “Fitness Challenge for 2009” (see appendix B) to 9 friends and relations. This letter outlined a number of fitness programmes and guidelines in which participants could choose from to develop their own exercise programme. The participants were encouraged to be their own personal trainers and self-motivators. The participants were also encouraged to do some daily exercise. The programmes were developed from: the Otago Daily Times – Fitness and Health articles written by Gary Dawkins, Creative Conditioning Owner and personal trainer, A 12-week programme from the Next Magazine, Dr John Tickell’s “The Great Australian diet” (Akins alternative) and Jen’s Special K Core Strength Session and Stretch programme. The participants were required to:

- Take base line measurements and photo of themselves, e.g. weight and height.
- Write down five health and fitness goals for the year.
- Record weekly health and fitness plan.

FITNESS PROGRAMME RESULTS

I telephoned participants to encourage them in the programme and determine how well they were going. The results showed that 4 of the participants started but also quickly did not complete the programme for a number of reasons; time constraints, lack of goals, poor planning, overseas travel, lack of commitment to the programme, lack of direction and mentoring, and a lack of motivation. 4 continued on their usual exercise programme, and nothing changed as a result of the fitness change. 2 participants are continuing on their programme, this included myself. Another person started the programme at the half-way point due to health reasons and her story is included in this report. I will tell you my story later in this project.

The fitness programme results did not answer the research question so further research was required, in the format of a survey.

Participant’s stories about their exercise journey

One of the objectives of the project was to support and encourage rural woman to become more active and these stories represent there journey.

Celia's Story

Age: 47

1. Plenty of information on exercises and choice to adapt/choose what exercises suited you.
2. Diane had clear guidelines to follow and book to document what programme you chose and exercises to record.
3. She telephoned to discuss programme and ask questions on progress you were or weren't making.

Why I failed?

1. Didn't set goals to achieve – so without a target/goal – no motivation.
2. Poor planning to put daily exercise into day – too many excuses.
3. Lack of commitment to programme.
4. A mental choice.

Lynda's story

I started getting into mountain biking last year mainly due to setting myself the challenge of entering some races. This was a new for me and something I was looking forward to as two of my old school friends also decided to enter the Motatapu mountain bike race with me. I think this also gave me the inspiration to train hard as I have always had a competitive nature and wanted to do my best and not be the friend everyone was waiting for. As the lead up to the big race I decide to enter the Hokonui Moonshine race a couple of months before. My husband was also going in both races and we would often train together.

I couldn't believe how much I enjoyed the Moonshine race. It was such a yucky we day and everyone was covered in mud but this added to the fun of it all. I ended up coming second in my section which was such a buzz. I was so proud of myself.

This year I am going to enter the Rail Trail Duathlon in February 2010 as part of a team with a girlfriend, my husband and his running partner Garry. I think it will be a lot of fun. After the Rail Trail there is the Gowan hill which I might also try this year.

I think exercise to me is like a drug – once you start you just have to keep going and if for some reason I didn't get the chance to ride my bike the day I had planned I almost feel like I have cheated myself and get really annoyed. I love riding up in the hills as I enjoy the peacefulness of it all, the views the air in your face and it also gives me heaps of time to think. I think if you have a fit body you have a healthy mind and when you get to our 40ths our lifestyles are pretty busy running around after children and all the other things we cram into our day. The exercise part of my day is just for me and I think I really need it.

As well as mountain biking I also ride my horses which even though it is not the same type of fitness it seems to work together and helps build up your muscles. I hope I am able to keep doing both well into my twilight years.

THE SURVEY

The sample group selected for this questionnaire was selected randomly from the Northern Southland Area. The sample group was 60 women. Data for the survey was obtained through face-to-face telephone interviews and written questionnaire forms. The majority of the sample was from Northern Southland area.

ANALYSIS PROCESS

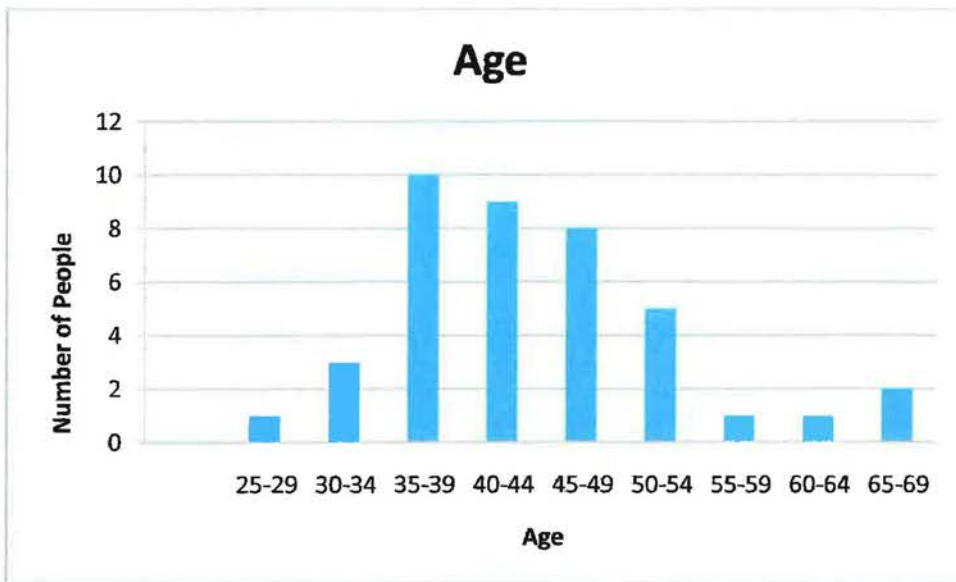
My daughter, Kate Smith aged 13 is currently in Year 8 at Northern-Southland School. She has an interest in computers. Kate offered to enter the data and prepare graphs based on the data inputted. Kate's input has been invaluable in the preparation of this report.

The graphs have been produced by inputting the relevant data and figures into Microsoft Excel and transferred into Microsoft Word.

THE SAMPLE

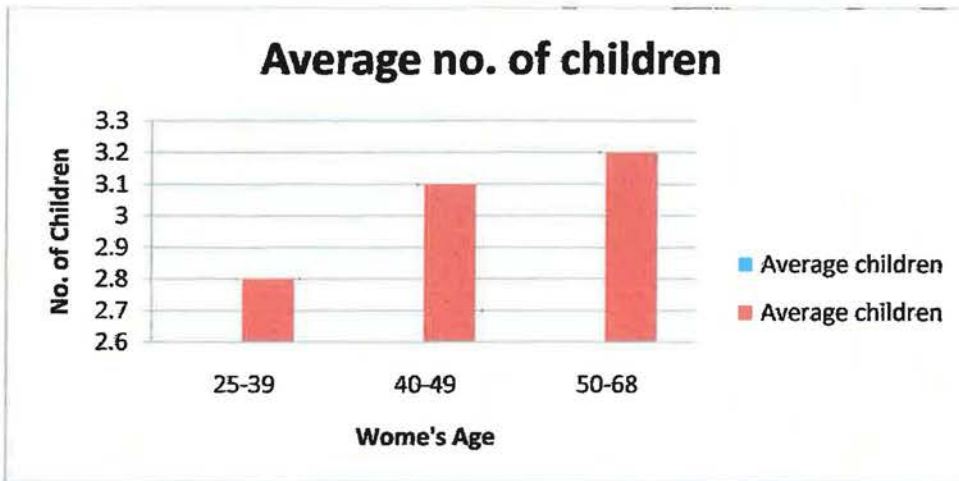
From the 60 survey forms sent out I received a response rate of 66.6%. The sample group were all women. The findings from the survey were as follows:

Q1. Age



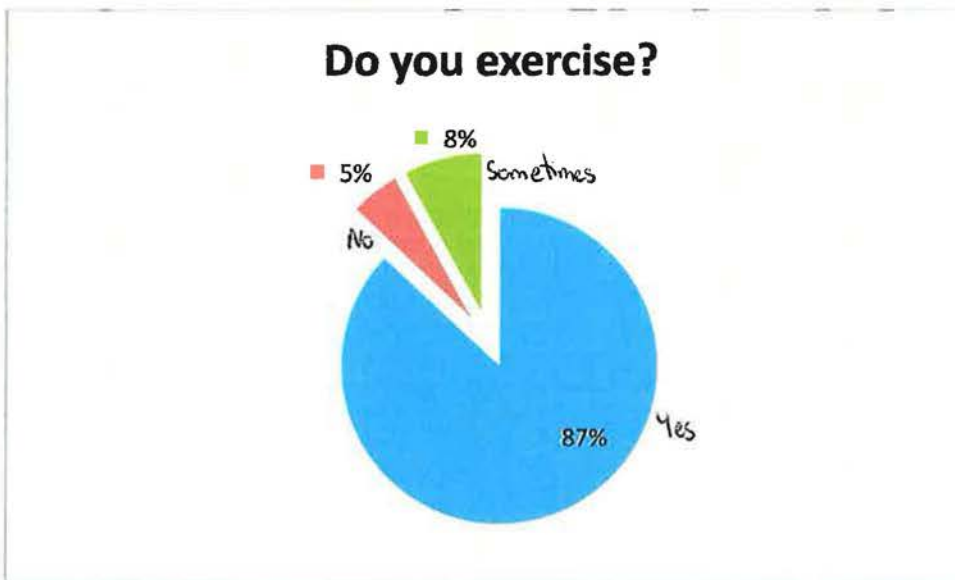
The majority age was from 35 to 49 years. 27 out of 40 woman who completed this Were in this age bracket. The youngest was 29 years old and the oldest was 68 Years old.

Q2. Number of Children



The older the women the more children they had i.e. the 50-68 year bracket had 3.2 children and the 25-39 year bracket had 2.8 children.

Q3: Do you exercise?



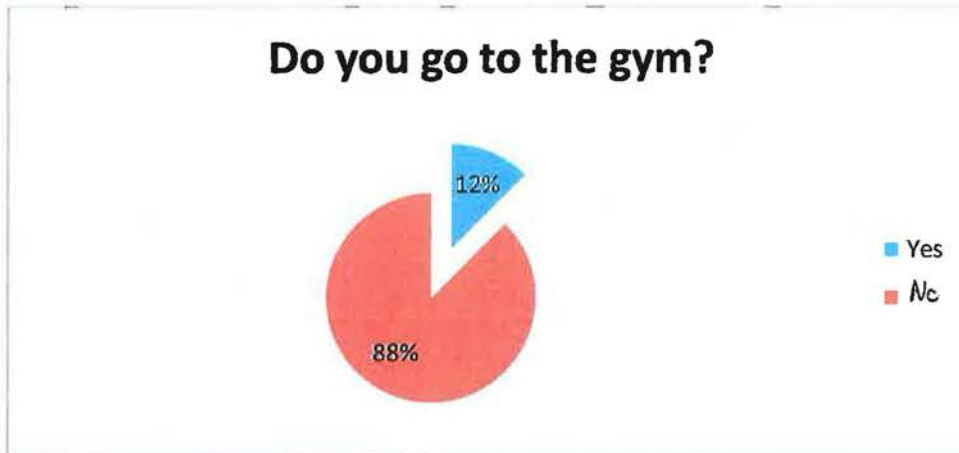
The majority of women exercised, that is 87% said yes, 8% said sometimes and 5% said no.

Q4: How often do you exercise?



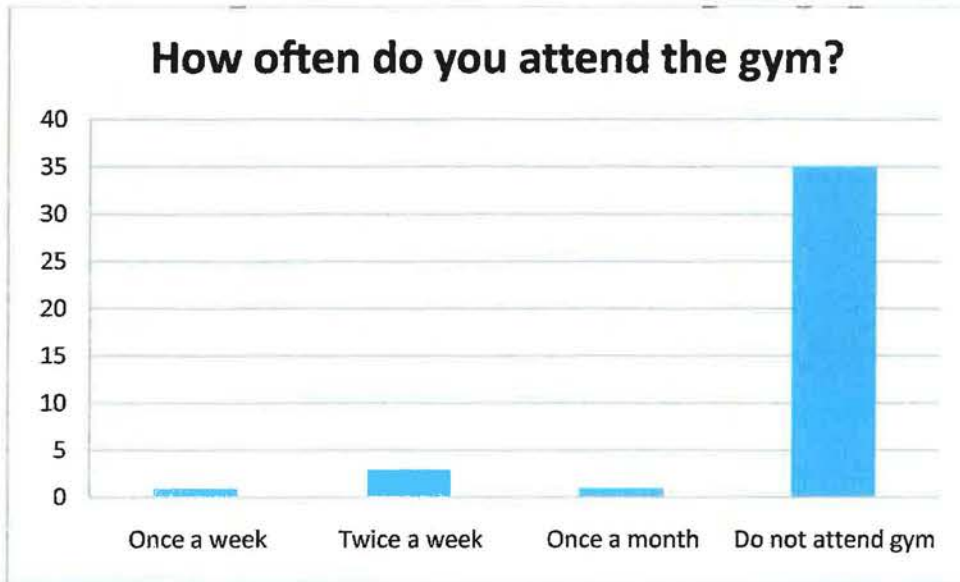
The majority of women did 3 hours exercise a week. A small group of women did as much as 6 hours a week. This did not take into account those who played sport or the travel involved.

Q5. Do you go to the gym?



88% of women did not attend a gym and only 12% attended the gym.

Q6. How often do you attend the gym?



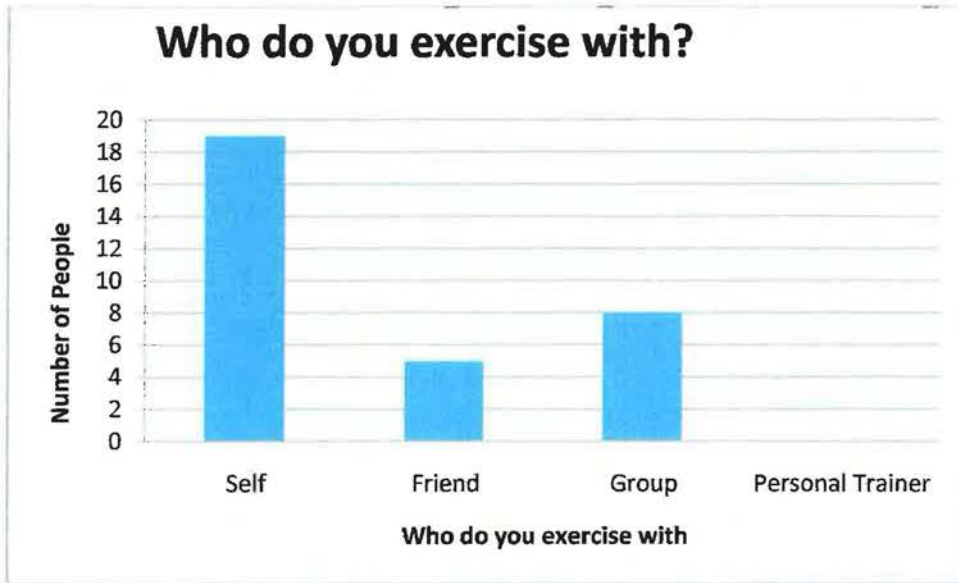
The majority (87.5%) of women did not attend a gym. A very small no. of women attended the gym between once and week and once a month. They used the gym for weights, circuit training and classes.

Q7 What motivates you to exercise?

To feel good	Weight/figure maintenance
Freedom to eat whatever I like	Good example to children
Fitness well being/keep healthy	Always exercised/sports
More energy	Social interaction
Clear the brain/fresh air	Work-seasonal/on farm as exercise
Health needs	Time out
Exercise is a lifestyle	Sleep better

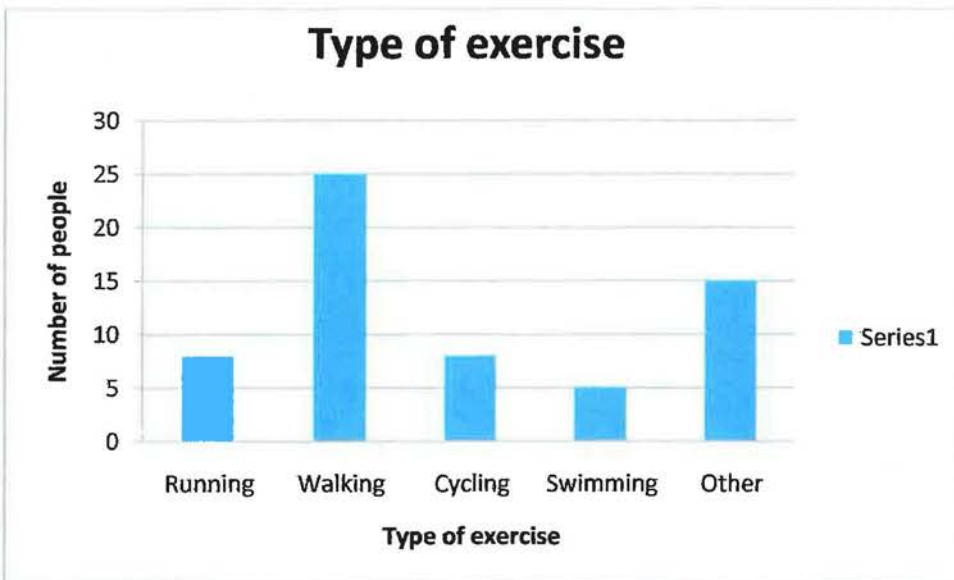
There was more than one motivating factor why women exercised.

Q8. Who do you exercise with?



The majority of women exercised by themselves. Some women exercised with a friend or a group of women. Some women did not make a response to this question. Other women sometimes exercised by themselves and at other times exercised with a friend or a group.

Q9. What type of exercise do you do?



25 women went walking, 7 women went running, 7 women cycled, 5 women went swimming and 15 women did other types of exercises.

Other exercise included: Turbo Jam (DVD), circuit training, sports teams, squash, pump classes, pilates, golf, home exercise equipment i.e. rowing machine, exercycle, working on the farm, and strength exercises.

Q10. What is the best time of day to exercise?



It appears that the best time of day of exercise for these women was anytime.

Q11. How long have you exercised for?



Q12. How many hours a week do you work on the farm?

45% of women worked on the farm, with varying hours from 1 – 30 hours a week. Some of the work was seasonal i.e. lambing, tailing, calving, shearing.

Q13. Are you involved in voluntary work?

65% of the women were involved in voluntary work between 1 and 6 hours a week.

Participant's stories from the Fitness Challenge Questionnaire

Alison's story

Age: 68

Some months ago Diane Smith asked me to be part of her fitness group her Kellogg's Healthy women and exercise study. At the time I was not interested in committing myself to the programme as I was not big on exercising.

But on 19th June 2009 I went for my yearly diabetic check up and the doctor wanted me to go onto insulin. I pleaded for him to give me 2 months and I would walk or exercise every day. With that incentive I did walk every day; except for 3; for 8 weeks.

11th September 2009 – I had an appointment at the Diabetic Clinic in Invercargill and then saw Professor Mann from Dunedin. He was pleased with my efforts and has not put me on insulin or on cholesterol tablets. He wants me to keep exercising and have repeat blood test of the above in 2 months.

Family History

My family has a history of diabetes. My grandmother died in a diabetic coma after an appendix operation. My mother, her 2 brothers and my sister are all diabetic. I am 68 years old, female and have never been a sports person nor into exercising. I do not find exercising easy – but to commit for 2 months didn't sound too difficult but now the incentive is not there I am back to it being too hard. Wet or windy days I use the exercycle for 20 minutes. It is not easy walked on gravel roads and I always walk on my own. We are commercial beekeepers and when the truck goes out so do I. The walking I do out at bees does help but it is not consistent nor for any length of time. I continue with daily exercise and this has assisted my health problems.

Michelle's Story

Age: 42

See appendix C for her story.

CONCLUSIONS

From the survey 40 women were either involved in a face-to-face or telephone interviews or completed the written survey. I found that majority of this sample group were well motivated regardless of age, how many children they had, whether they were working on the farm or involved in voluntary community work they still managed to exercise without the use of gyms. Anecdotally an example is, one woman used a DVD "Turbo Jam" to exercise because she has young children at home and found this to be great. One other woman played netball and paid for a babysitter to look after her children whilst she played a team sport. These both gave her the opportunity to socialize and get fit. A small group of women exercise by walking 6 km at 6.30 am in the morning and have done some for a number of years. One

woman has in fact been going for 11 years and they do not go in the fog, rain or snow. I found the women that had exercised for a number of years were well motivated and had a plan and could clearly state the advantages of exercise. A number of women played squash in the evenings so that they could use their partners to care for their children.

Limitations to the survey

I found that I should have given more exercise choices as a number of women saw gardening, housework and farm work as exercise. These are not necessarily formal exercise but are exercise. The sample group was too small and the age group not wide enough.

Analysis from the Fitness Challenge for 2009 and Fitness Questionnaire shows women in the rural setting get fit and maintain a fitness level without having to pay exorbitant amounts to attend gyms; this includes travel and time costs to get there.

EXERCISE RESEARCH

Key barriers to exercising

Sparc (2003) research suggests that some of the key barriers to exercise include:

- lack of time and or energy
- lack of encouragement or support from others
- health problems

Key Motivators to exercising

Sparc (2003) research suggests that some of the key motivators to exercising include:

- awareness and belief the physical activity is good for your health
- desire to keep in shape
- encouragement from others or wanting to role model physically active behaviours.

Advantages of Exercising

Just some of the known benefits of exercise as quoted by my friend and GP Dr Hesté Henning

1. Burns kilojoules which lead to weight loss.
2. Tone Up – increases muscle tone, giving you a defined look.
3. Your brain releases endorphins which makes you feel on top of the world.
4. Increases muscle tissue which increases basal metabolism rate (BMR). Able to burn kilojoules even when you are not exercising.
5. Burn fat stores which otherwise could only be burned if you starve yourself.
6. Get rid of waste products through pores.
7. Pores unblock and skin looks better and healthier.
8. Increased muscle strength means the joints carry less weight so less chance of arthritis.
9. Delay aging process due to O₂ delivery to the tissues.

10. Think more clearly.
11. Stress levels down because of endorphins
12. Burn sugars which leads to stable blood sugar level.
13. Burn fats, so there is less chance of heart disease.

Exercise Tips from Dr Hesté Henning

1. Find an activity you enjoy and stick to it.
2. Find a time of day that you can fit in that works for you.
3. Understand the benefits of exercise.
4. Self discipline
5. Exercise at least 3-5 times a week.
6. Aerobic exercises to get the heart rate up.

Research shows that we need to exercise for at least 30 minutes 4 times a week until you are hot and sweaty to get maximum benefit from your exercise.

How to start an exercise programme

Is the thought of starting a fitness programme overwhelming? Where do I start? You need to make a commitment. Make the decision right this minute to consistently include physical activity in your life. Promise yourself that no matter what comes up you will exercise a minimum of three times a week and that you will be more physically active in day-to-day life (McGraw, 2009). Take an inventory of the fitness equipment you already have at home, e.g. neighbour to walk with that you could tag along, a DVD player or you could may be borrow or swap exercise tapes.

Start small and accept that what you can do now is good enough and is your personal best for that day. You can always build upon it e.g. walk 5 km in an hour, then 5 km in 55 minutes. Acknowledge all progress, and be proud of your efforts.

Top Tips to help you exercise

Top tips that have helped me make it a priority over the years to exercise by McGraw (2009).

1. Schedule your workouts – life tends to get busy and if you don't make time for exercise, no one else is going to make it for you.
2. Buddy up – often working out with another person improves your chances that you'll stick with.
3. Consult with the expert – Not everyone has the money to spend on a personal trainer but it is worth it to invest in even a few sessions. Even if you can't afford a trainer, talk to a friend or co-worker who's an avid exerciser (or even that woman at the gym you admire).
4. Take Notes – plan out the week and write down when you are going to exercise – keep track of each work out, what I did and how I felt.
5. Tell others about your new fitness regime. Sharing your plans to get fit helps you stay accountable.
6. Set a goal – having a goal in mind is motivating because it gives you something to strive to.

MY STORY

Exercise does not come easy to me because I am either not motivated, or other things or people are a greater priority before exercising. In my single days I have played sport and taken up jogging.

A couple of years ago a friend and I completed our first ½ marathon walk at the Masters games in Dunedin with some training. This year at the Kellogg course the majority of participants would get up at 6 am and go off and exercise. I thought I'd better be diligent and do the same thing. Walking in the morning got me thinking about exercising for the good of my health and how could I do this.

Living in the rural community it is not easy to go to a gym and use sports amenities that a town or city offers such as swimming pool, sports stadiums etc because of our isolation. The question is it possible to get fit, maintain a fitness level without having to spend exorbitant money on gyms etc. There started my journey of pounding (walking) the roads of Northern Southland – close to home. At the same time I wanted to encourage other women around my age (49) to be doing the same thing. I thought they could benefit from my journey as well. At the same time the Next magazine was promoting health and fitness programmes which gave a choice of running/walking, swimming, triathlon – a programme that would only cost the price of the magazine. They had the same idea as me. This is something I could do. Dr John Tickell (2001, p82) states that “moving our bodies one percent of our week equates to 1.68 or 100 minutes each week. He says it is not an impossible task and the minutes never change.”

At the same time in the Otago Daily Times, Gary Dawkins from Creative Conditioning were running a 10 week fitness programme.

All programmes in place and away I went. I mainly concentrated on walking and disciplined myself to walk most days. It worked out to be 3-4 times a week. I kept a diary and wrote down what I did and my feeling related to the exercises. All went well until our family took a 16 day holiday to Sydney and Western Australia and return. It took me a good 6 weeks to get back to exercise. Gary Dawkins – states the longer you leave exercise harder it is to get back into it. This was true for me. I think having a goal is important and try to stick with them. One of my aims was to complete another half marathon (as a recreational walker) which my friend Cathy and I completed on the 13th of September 2009. It was enough motivation to keep my walking programme going. I used Marlborough's Vineyard 16 week training programme for a 21 km walk which I based my training on but didn't do the warm up exercises!! It worked out writing down how long I walked for and the days I walked. I averaged 3-4 times a week. On the day of the 21.5 recreation walk. The weather was great, along with 700 participants walking as well – finish in 3 hours 15, not bad. Next year my aim is to complete it in 3 hours. Hears hoping.

In the last six weeks (21 Sept) my neighbour Donna Wilkins who is a double international netball and basketball player has encouraged me and created a programme (see appendix D) for me. The goal set is exercising 6 times a week and to write down exercise type, time/distance and number of reps, feeling and comments. This time around I am walking 3x weekly, biking 2 times a week. Yes I do have a bike, swimming 1x weekly – I do go to Gore (50 km) to drop off my boys at Gore High Hostel. So there is no excuse. The hardest part is to remember to put the togs in the car.

I have found having a mentor like Donna, you tend to be more accountable and she is there as an encourager. Donna has offered her services free, she is a close neighbour. Donna, her baby Cooper and I have now been to the Gore x2 swimming and out walking – social interaction is great. Social interaction is important when you are in a rural isolation.

My plans for the next 6 months – yes I do have plans and it is to continue with my individual programme. The next goal is 21.5 ½ marathon recreation walk for the master in Dunedin 31st January 2010 and to walk the Motatapu from Wanaka to Arrowtown on the 14th March 2010 and at Easter 2010 bike the Central Otago rail trail Clyde to Middlemarch. I am trying to make exercise part of my lifestyle.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion from the fitness challenge, the fitness questionnaire I presented to a number of woman in Northern Southland and my own personal fitness challenge I have found that

1. It is possible for women to exercise regularly in a rural setting even though they lead hectic lives with pressing time commitments.
2. Women need to be well motivated and have the drive and determination to make exercise a priority.
3. Rural women are involved in voluntary community work, also paid employment and working on the farm.
4. Women don't need to go to the gym or employ personal trainers to achieve a fitness level that makes them fit and healthy.
5. Those women that had been exercising for years had always done so and continue to do regardless of family commitments and time constraints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Knowing the benefits and advantages of exercising will ensure you will exercise, maintain a level of fitness and make it fun and enjoyable.
2. Make exercise a priority and part of your lifestyle.
3. By setting goals and recording your progress, you can look back on your progress and have a sense of satisfaction and well being.
4. Exercise consistently for a minimum 3 times a week and surround yourself with positive people.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Fitness Questionnaire

Appendix B: Fitness Challenge for 2009

Appendix C: Michelle's Story

Appendix D: Exercise programme designed for Diane Smith by Donna Wilkins

Appendix B

Fitness Challenge for 2009

Here is the wellness/fitness programme I promised. You will be your own personal fitness trainer. I have included a number of fitness programmes. Choose the one that suits you, mix and match or do them all.

1. 2009 fitness programme comes from the ODT. Gary Dawkins is my cousin's son. I will send the next 4 weeks when the programme finishes.
2. A 12 week programme from Jan, Feb, March 2009 Next magazine.
3. Dr John Tickells book The Great Australian diet the atkins alternative. I heard him speak at a ASB sheep & beef conference a few years ago.
4. Jens Special K Core Strength Session and Stretch programme choice 3 or 4 exercises
5. Some information on healthy eating.

To get the most out of your programme take your initial weight, height and measurements outlined in the handout and a photo of yourself.

Write 5 of your own health and fitness values/goals for this year eg. Complete a half marathon, lose 10% of body weight, 100% commitment, discipline, fun, drive to make it happen. Use the exercise book to write down your initial measurements and goals and each week health and fitness plan

- Targets achieved
- Challenges faced
- Obstacles (what stopped you, what got in the way)
- Successful days
- Ideas to pass on to others.

Please contact me by phone, letter, or email. There are about 8-10 of us completing this programme. Do some exercises everyday. Be encouraged.

Regards

Diane Smith

Appendix C

Fitness Challenge

When I offered to take part in this programme, I thought it would be easy to complete. I was very wrong.

I started off very motivated, read all the information Diane had given me to read plus some more information I had found in different publications, such as Next & Healthy Options, magazines.

The first two weeks worked well, I walked every day, I planned the family meals and we stuck to the menu plan.

I initially I lost 6 kgs, I then went on holiday and put on 2 kgs..

Then..... I started traveling for work again, although I did take my walking shoes I didn't always manage to get a walk in each morning. The challenge I find when I am away is that I do not always feel safe to go walking on my own in areas I do not know. Not all venue's have gyms to use.

I put on another 2 kgs just by not keeping up with the walking and healthy eating.

The eating plan, goes out the window when I am away as I eat out all the time, I did my best to stick to chicken salad or fish dishes, if I am in a catered meeting I now tell the organizers that I am gluten intolerant, as I find you get healthy foods to choose from, not so many carbs.

After meeting with Diane again I decided that I really had to try harder, so I planned the family menu for two weeks again, this was great as we were calving and it helped with being organized.

I have managed to keep up with the walking most days and am noticing the difference in how I feel and of course in how the clothes fit.

The main challenges I have to commit to exercise every day are the weather, our local roads, and time.

When the weather is extremely icy cold I only have to be walking 5 minutes and I have asthma, so completing a walk is not advisable.

To walk on good flat and safe roads I need to get in the car and drive as our roads are shingle and very steep. It seems stupid to me to get in car to drive so I can exercise.

Time, is the main issue, during the calving season I am up at 5.00 am, busy on farm, working off farm and being taxi to children. It is too dark to walk at night and I have been up since 5.00 am and am really tired by 7.00 at night.

To some people these sound like excuses, they are a reality to rural life. Most of us in the rural sector are farmers, wives, mothers, house keepers, taxi drivers, volunteer workers (in multiple roles) sports coaches / supporters, office administrators, the list goes on. It is not

always easy to fit our wants and needs in as well as everyone else's. Even if there was a local gym just down the road, they are expensive to join and you also have to have time to attend the gym.

I find I might plan to go for a walk in the morning, as I am about to go my husband will call up and ask me to go to the local farm supplier or garage for some urgent item needed on the farm (and it is always urgent), so there goes the morning and the afternoon has it's own list of jobs needing to be done.

I look forward to the day when, the children have left home, the farm is sold and I have time to exercise, eat well and look after myself first,..... Although by then I will properly be sitting in a rest home being looked after because I will be too tired to take care of myself!!

Appendix D

Fitness Programme

DIANE SMITH

OPTIONS

WALK – 6km

SIT-UPS – 3 sets of 10 reps (*go as far up as you can*)

PRESS-UPS – 3 sets of 10 reps

If walk completed in the morning then do the sit-ups and press-ups at night, or vice versa.

(Complete this 2 times during the week)

BIKE – 10km ride

SKIPPING – 5 sets, 30 seconds skipping, 30 seconds rest

If bike completed in the morning then do the skipping at night, or vice versa.

(Complete this 2 times during the week)

SWIMMING – 45 minutes of your choice

You must include at least 2 lengths kicking with a kick board.

ABDOMINALS – Swiss ball exercises

GARDENING

As an option you can substitute gardening (1 hour) for a walk or a bike. (Not more than once a week though).

REST DAY

It is very important that you include one rest day during the week.

FEELINGS

Ratings are from 1-10, 1 = poor; 10 = excellent

It is important to rate your feelings after each session so I can adapt the programme to suit where you are at.

