

**Exercise Motivation and Self Determination: The Future of Fitness and Training**

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## Abstract

**Background:** Regardless of whether one's goal is to lose body fat, increase lean muscle mass, gain strength, boost speed, or just promote overall health and wellness, that person must first be motivated to put in the labor necessary to experience a favorable outcome.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to prove that, with regard to exercise motivation, different demographics of people respond uniquely to certain approaches and that a stronger comprehension of the topic would be highly beneficial to the members of society and society as a whole.

**Design and Method:** The research method is based on current scholarly research literature in Psychology and Sports Medicine. This research was gathered via a number of academic databases and libraries and then subsequently examined through the lens of the primary research questions. The study is strictly qualitative as it synthesizes the collected research in a way that supports the claims being made. The referenced studies utilize many different data-gathering tools in their research, including questionnaires, variable associations, bivariate correlations, and quantitative analyses of empirical studies. Chapter IV contains the results of this qualitative methodology which were effective in answering the main research questions being asked:

**RQ1:** *With regard to motivation, do different demographics of people respond uniquely to certain approaches?*

**RQ2:** *Does there exist a gross lack of understanding within the fitness world with regard to motivational tactics?*

**RQ3:** *Would a stronger collective comprehension of the subject yield inevitably positive outcomes for the overall health and fitness of American communities?*

**Results:** The results of this study suggest that all three of the aforementioned researched questions can be answered with a resounding 'yes.'

**Conclusions:** A person's motivation to train is, without a doubt, one of the most vitally important factors of just about any exercise regimen. Once one is intrinsically motivated to achieve a particular goal, it is far easier for that person to experience success in that area. By unlocking the mysteries of our psychology, humanity would almost certainly be propelled to whole new levels of physical fitness. With our community experiencing such favorable increases in its overall health, who knows what other matters humanity could focus its attention on?

**Keywords:** *Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Sports Psychology, Sports Education, Self-Efficacy, Exercise, Health, Intensity, Duration, Self-Determination, Self Determination Theory, Neuroticism, Weight Loss, Weight Gain, SDT, Aerobic Exercise, Neuroplasticity, Anaerobic Exercise, Prochaska, Prochaska's 10 Processes of Change, transtheoretical model of behavioral change, Exercise Program, and Exercise Psychology.*

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction:**

For centuries, our species has studied the human body, actively looking for ways to test its limits and enhance its performance. Human anatomy and physiology are the very foundations upon which medicine is built. These curiosities have transcended into modern times to an astonishing degree. It is all too often that we are exposed to advertisements promoting a new weight loss program or muscle-building supplement that can change the way we look and feel. Why is this? It is because companies know full well that the majority of people that see said advertisements care about what they look and feel like. For years, we have been taught about the monumental benefits of exercise and proper diet, not only for our physique, but even for our mental well-being. Society already knows how beneficial healthy diet and exercise can be. It is difficult to argue otherwise considering all of the literature that has been published on the matter.

So, why is it that obesity rates continue to rise? Why is it just as hard now as it was 50 years ago to get into a good physical fitness routine? Why do we so often find ourselves intending to begin an exercise program, but rarely actually follow through? The answer is simple. We are spending far too much time, energy, and focus on the exercises themselves, and not nearly enough on the first step of the process; motivation to exercise. Motivation to exercise and self-determination are psychological phenomena that have yet to receive their time to shine at the forefront of the fitness industry. We are often fooled into believing that lifting weights in the gym or going for a run are exclusively physical processes. We neglect the pre-/post-workout phases of our training and proceed with the assumption that exercise itself is the only thing that matters. In reality, one's mental state has a huge role to play in the overall picture, particularly in

terms of consistency and sustainability. If one is not motivated to succeed, it will reflect in their training and ultimately, their results. The same principle applies to those who are motivated, yielding more favorable outcomes.

The research presented in this review aims to prove that different demographics of people respond uniquely to particular motivational approaches. There is no one-size fits all approach to exercise motivation. I believe that motivational stimuli must be adjusted on an individual basis to yield the best results and hope to prove that intrinsic motivation to exercise has varying approaches which should be applied individually and not as an all-encompassing approach. While overall increase in the population's health is the ultimate objective, the true progress begins with the individual.

This research also aims to prove that there exists a gross lack of understanding with regard to motivational tactics and that a greater understanding of the subject would yield inevitably positive outcomes for the overall health and fitness of American communities. In order for one to feel the desire to improve their health to a substantial enough degree, they must first be motivated enough to get into the gym and exert effort in a way that will almost certainly result in pain, exhaustion, and notable soreness the next day. The motivation to change must be so great that it overcomes these unpleasanties; otherwise, the efforts will more likely than not, prove to be futile. The act of becoming motivated is a psychological phenomenon that the scientific community still has much more to learn about. However, with proper education on what we already do know on the topics of motivation and exercise, as demonstrated via the literature mentioned within this review, new and innovative practices can be implemented into people's everyday lives, changing them for the better.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

People have long been enamored by the human body and how it works. For decades, experts have tried to decipher the secrets behind how one could completely alter themselves, aesthetically and physiologically, all by simply fostering healthy fitness habits in their everyday lives. There are plenty of data sources that testify to the mental and physical benefits of healthy exercise/dieting habits. The benefits of training are not in question here, although many said benefits will be highlighted in pursuit of the primary research questions. This research aims to prove that there exists a gross lack of understanding with regard to motivational tactics and that a greater understanding of the subject would yield inevitably positive outcomes for the overall health and fitness of American communities. As many experts in the field of fitness would agree, just getting into the gym is the hardest part of one's workout. Perhaps the most daunting aspect of getting into a healthy physical fitness regimen is simply getting started, which begins with oneself. Before one can hope to take the first steps toward their fitness goals, he or she must first be inclined to do so intrinsically and on their own accord. In order for one to feel the desire to improve their health to a substantial enough degree, they must first be motivated enough to get into the gym and exert effort in a way that will almost certainly result in pain, exhaustion, and notable soreness the next day. The motivation to change must be so great so as to overcome these unpleasantnesses; otherwise, the efforts will more likely than not, prove to be futile. The act of becoming motivated is a psychological phenomenon that the scientific community still has much more to learn about. However, with proper education on what we already do know on the topics of motivation and exercise, as demonstrated via the literature mentioned within this review, new and innovative practices can be implemented into people's everyday lives. Ideally, this would

consequently assist the population as a whole in leading a more active lifestyle, particularly during times of pandemic like these.

The research presented will review how different demographics of people respond uniquely to particular approaches to get them motivated. Many believe that the current one-size-fits-all approach to physical education in schools and colleges and the current methods used in motivating people to exercise are outdated. Motivational stimuli must be adjusted on an individual basis to yield the best results to get effective results out of people. This study aims to prove that intrinsic motivation to exercise has varying approaches that should be applied individually and not as an all-encompassing approach. While overall increase in the population's health is the ultimate objective, the progress begins on an individual basis. If the research mentioned above proves valid, there is ample room to discuss the implications of using this knowledge in physical education programs and even commercial fitness programs to better cater to the client's needs. There exists a menagerie of sources on motivation to exercise, with all of which testifying to the level of interest on the subject in modern times. This literature will review research posed by experts in sports medicine, fitness, and motivational psychology. Each set of authors has their knowledge to contribute to the subject and, together, should provide sufficient support in answering the research question.

In the first study, Brunet and Sabiston (2011) examine the relationship and differences of motivational regulations and physical activity in three different age groups. The researchers distributed questionnaires to 547 people that live within these age groups and analyzed the data. Analyses showed that motivational regulations and physical activity levels do indeed differ across age groups. Regression analyses were conducted while controlling BMI, gender, education level, and ethnicity. The findings showed how age is an incredibly important

consideration when studying motivation to engage in physical activity. There is a correlation in the strength of associations found between the motivational regulations and exercise behavior showed varying results from age group to age group. Determining what influences intrinsic motivation to engage in physical activity could yield monumental outcomes for the exercise and fitness world. This article was composed of experts in psychology and published in *Psychology of Sport and Science*, a reputable publication in the world of sports medicine and psychology. These findings can prove useful to the research being conducted here because the findings highlight the importance of considering age when studying physical activity motivation. The association strengths varied in different age groups, and so it is only logical to tailor specific intervention programs to certain demographics where the impacts will be most notable. There is no one size fits all method to promoting healthy habits and intrinsic motivation. Identifying factors that influence intrinsic motivation and identified regulation for physical activity within each age segment is necessary to develop interventions to increase physical activity behavior now and later in life.

In a recent study, Chawak, Chittem, Varghese, and Epton (2020) prepared a sample of 161 college students enrolled in an introductory psychology course were given questionnaires regarding stress, social support systems, self-efficacy, and various components of the Health Belief Model, which include things like a perceived threat, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, and common health behaviors. Self-efficacy significantly predicted alcohol and smoking behavior, physical activity and nutrition protective behavior, general safety protective behavior, and sun-protective behavior. Under high-perceived threat, self-efficacy was mediated by perceived barriers for binge drinking and moderated by perceived barriers for physical activity and nutrition behaviors.

The types of health habits developed at a young age are likely to transcend into adulthood. For many incoming undergraduates, the new college environment can be quite daunting and riddled with obstacles that must be overcome for success. This new environment allows for more freedom than ever before. Research presented in this article suggests that many people of this demographic engage in activities that are detrimental to their health, like binge drinking, smoking, and poor nutritional behavior. The college environment could be instrumental in future research because acknowledging these harsh realities will surely pave the way for future health programs to incorporate more effective intervention programs that maximize self-efficacy, ultimately minimizing the difficulty of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Duncan, Hall, and Wilson (2010) performed a study including 1079 people, 468 males and 612 females. All were asked to complete assessments that tested the frequency, intensity, and duration of their exercise. They were also given the Behavioral Regulation in Exercise Questionnaire, including four additional items assessing integrated regulation. The bivariate correlations that were drawn demonstrated that each index (frequency, intensity, and duration) had more significant correlations to autonomous regulations rather than controlling regulations. Further analyses revealed that integrated and identified regulations predicted exercise frequency for both sexes. Introjected regulation only affected females, however. These findings suggest that exercise regulations that vary in their degree of internalization can differentially predict exercise behavior characteristics. In other words, everyone is motivated differently and responds to different types of motivational practices.

It is well known that physical activity translates well into a healthy lifestyle; however, a very large portion of the population fails to maintain the level of activity necessary to experience health benefits. It is vital that we understand how different types of motivation affect one's

propensity to exercise. By identifying the tendencies associated with certain traits and characteristics, we can effectively design plans that afford people a better opportunity for success. With the self-determination theory as the primary foundation upon which this research is built, there is much to be gained from considering literature such as this. It essentially answers the research question in itself.

In this study, Grubbs and Carter (2002) examined the exercise habits of 147 undergraduate students in order to better understand the perceived benefits and barriers to physical exercise. Many relationships were drawn between the perceived benefits and barriers to exercise and modern-day exercise habits in college undergraduate students, which was quite telling about potential future implications in physical education programs. The benefits most often associated with regular exercise-related most strongly to physical performance and overall general appearance. Most of the barriers associated with sporadic or nonexistent exercise habits tend to relate more to physical exertion and time constraints. What this ultimately suggests is that those who exercised more frequently and consistently exhibited stronger physical ability and perceived general appearance. At the same time, those who do not maintain a regular training routine tended to perform worse.

The *Journal of Health Promotion and Maintenance* published this article. Grubbs and Carter (2002), two Ph.D. experts in the field of health habits, this article would undoubtedly serve as a powerful testament to the hypothesis presented within this work proving that healthy exercise habits yield improvements in quality of life. A greater understanding of perceived benefits and barriers to exercise may assist health care providers and educators in establishing methods for promoting exercise and consistent exercise habits, which could ultimately result in the improved physical and mental health of the college-aged population. The information that this article

provides powerfully supports the importance of exercise and highlights the benefits that one can experience from a healthy exercise routine.

The aim of this study was to better understand the role of motives in exercise participation. It was hypothesized by Ingledeu and Markland (2008) that motives influence exercise participation by influencing behavioral regulation and that motives are themselves influenced by personality traits. Two hundred fifty-two office workers were surveyed with a questionnaire, and it turns out that appearance/weight motive increased external regulation, thereby reducing participation and increased introjected regulation. Health/fitness motive increased identified regulation, thereby increasing participation. Social engagement motive increased intrinsic regulation. It is inferred that exercise promotion programs should encourage other motives more conducive to autonomous motivation without denigrating appearance or weight motive.

There is no single explanation behind how to motivate someone to exercise. This article, published by a reputable journal in the psychological studies community, evaluates different levels of external regulations that were increased as a result of motives based on appearance/weight. On the other hand, it shows that those who are more motivated by the health/fitness aspect of exercise were more likely to participate in exercise and less likely to experience external and introjected regulation. This article discusses only some of the demographics discussed in the article, among many others. This information can be effective in helping illustrate the fact that different approaches work better for different types of people and that when moving forward, exercise plans are primarily related to personality traits and consequently should be customized to those partaking.

The self-determination theory has long been examined but only in theoretical contexts. This article examines the theory more comprehensively by considering empirical data as well as

qualitative information. This review, conducted by Mears (2018), includes 66 empirical studies published up to June 2011. Through quantitative analyses, the results showed consistent support for a positive relationship between more autonomous forms of motivation and exercise, with a trend towards identified regulation predicting initial/short-term adoption more strongly than intrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation being more predictive of long-term exercise adherence. Overall, the literature provides good evidence for the value of SDT in understanding exercise behavior, demonstrating the importance of autonomous (identified and intrinsic) regulations in fostering physical activity.

As a publication of the *American College of Sports Medicine*, this content found within this source is without question reliable and credible in its assertions. The empirical support of the conclusions mentioned above would serve as an integral facet in this research. As the study notes, the Self Determination Theory has little evidence to support it beyond the theoretical. By using the quantitative analyses and conclusions drawn by the authors, the veracity of this research can be strengthened, thus proving that there is a relationship between the different types of motivation (intrinsic vs. initial/short-term adoption) and exercise. Assuming that an increase in exercise will lead to better physical and mental welfare, this article could be very useful in supporting the claims made herein.

The following article was published by Schumacher, Thomas, Raynor, Rhodes, and Bond (2020) are all experts in exercise and bariatric health as written in the *Exercise and Sports Science Review* by the American College of Sports Medicine. Their work delves into how those with obesity are better off performing their aerobic exercise in the morning as opposed to as in later hours of the day. It is hypothesized that a consistent exercise time, and especially a consistent morning routine, can drastically improve exercise adherence and weight management

for individuals that suffer from obesity. The article was accepted for publication in May of 2020, which means its findings are likely to reflect modern-day circumstances, consequently serving as an excellent source upon which to base further research.

This next article could be fundamental for many reasons, one of which being its recent publication date. Not only are the sources credible, but they are modern, which could be significant in assessing the societal habits/practices of modern-day Americans. Furthermore, this article highlights several very different approaches to exercise, motivation, and exercise adherence potential that vary with differing indices of measurement, namely obesity. If the data presented in this article is valid, there are innumerable potential benefits to be had. The information programs of exercise could be crafted on a more individual basis. The knowledge that different people, personality traits, body types, and genetics require different approaches to fitness is perhaps the most crucial pillar in this capstone.

Sullum, Clark, and King (2000) conducted a study using questionnaires to measure Prochaska's ten processes of change for exercise, self-efficacy, and decisional balance to 52 (physically active) undergraduate students. They assessed baseline exercise levels in October and reassessed them again about eight weeks later. At baseline, participants who relapsed had significantly lower self-efficacy scores than those who maintained their exercise levels. Those who relapsed also displayed higher perceived negative views of exercise. These findings provide support for applying the transtheoretical model of behavioral change to a college population.

Getting somebody to be motivated intrinsically to exercise is a daunting enough task as it is. However, what does one do when the initial steps have been taken, and the real difficulty comes to lie in maintaining these changes? In studying the associations drawn with regard to self-efficacy and relapse, there is much evidence to help formulate more effective exercise plans for

undergraduate students that minimize the potential for relapse. According to the article published in the *Journal of American College Health*, exercise improves physical and mental health. Nevertheless, most 20-year-olds do not exercise, and approximately 50% of the participants in exercise programs drop out in the first 3 to 6 months. By isolating the factors that most contribute to one dropping out of an exercise program, perhaps steps can be taken to help prevent that from happening, resulting in an ultimately healthier individual.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The design of this study is both descriptive and qualitative. However, many of my arguments are founded upon quantitative research studies. This research aims to prove that there is a gross lack of understanding in the fitness world regarding motivational tactics and that a stronger collective comprehension of the subject would inevitably yield positive outcomes for the overall health and fitness of American communities. I chose to use various scholarly articles from the years 2000 to 2020 to help support my main points. The research presented reviews how, with regard to motivation, different demographics of people respond uniquely to particular approaches. The studies used to help support this claim are used to help illustrate how motivational stimuli must be adjusted on an individual basis to yield the best results to get effective results out of people. This study ultimately aims to prove that intrinsic motivation to exercise has varying approaches that should be applied individually and not as an all-encompassing approach. While the overall increase in the population's health is the ultimate objective, progress begins on an individual basis. So, the data collected in my research is quite applicable on many levels.

By using research studies performed by leading experts in their respective fields, I am offering legitimacy to many of the claims I make throughout this study. Most of the research presented was gathered via the Purchase College Library and online databases like ProQuest, ebsco.com, PubMed, Google Scholar. I also found some medical publications via my searches through the internet. I have some bias on the topic in that I am an avid gym goer with plans of pursuing sports medicine as a career. While anecdotal reasons may have initially propelled me to perform this research, none of the data used or conclusions drawn come from personal

experience. Only research found in reputable and scholarly journals was used so as to preserve the integrity of this study. While Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and its fitness application were the primary focus, there were also many quantifiable data gathered from participants via empirical research practices. The studies I reference utilize many different data-gathering tools in their research, including questionnaires, variable associations, bivariate correlations, and quantitative analyses of empirical studies.

Specific terms were used to search for academic articles that would prove relevant to my research. Some of those terms included the following: *Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Sports Psychology, Sports Education, Self-Efficacy, Exercise, Health, Intensity, Duration, Self-Determination, Self-Determination Theory, Neuroticism, Weight Loss, Weight Gain, SDT, Aerobic Exercise, Anaerobic Exercise, Prochaska, Prochaska's 10 Processes of Change, transtheoretical model of behavioral change, Exercise Program, and Exercise Psychology*. It is important to be familiar with these terms as many of the studies utilize such vocabulary often.

The primary limitation here was time and the fact that I did not have the ability to compile more sources in a way that would allow me to articulate my findings better. Fortunately, this is a qualitative study, so there is not much room for metric error. I did, however, find difficulty in sifting through the scholarly and non-scholarly articles. The critical reading proved to be particularly troublesome since today's world is abundant with people, products, and programs that claim to boost physical performance. Since I had no way of proving their claims as valid, I tried to limit my research to strictly science-based sources of information. Since the purpose of my study is to prove that many confounding variables in the fitness world must be accounted for, I have little to consider on that front. The primary difficulty when using this type of methodology was to organize my thoughts and the supporting articles to support my thesis.

## Chapter 4

### Results

This chapter is intended to summarize the data that was collected and any statistical analyses that were performed. Seeing as statistical analyses require approval from the Institutional Review Board, a timely process, the information gathered was analyzed and synthesized qualitatively. Chapter IV contains the results to this methodology which were effective in answering the main research questions being asked:

**RQ1:** *With regard to motivation, do different demographics of people respond uniquely to certain approaches?*

**RQ2:** *Does there exist a gross lack of understanding within the fitness world with regard to motivational tactics?*

**RQ3:** *Would a stronger collective comprehension of the subject yield inevitably positive outcomes for the overall health and fitness of American communities?*

The results of this study suggests that all three of the aforementioned researched questions can be answered with a resounding 'yes'. Each question segues into the next, allowing for information on all three research questions to be gathered from the same source(s). Each of the scholarly articles that were collected to support the claims being made within this work clearly illustrate how motivational stimuli must be adjusted on an individual basis in order to get the most effective results, thus collectively answering the first research question. Although some of the articles that were used just highlighted the relationship between motivational psychology and exercise, they were effective in demonstrating just how much the two have to do with one another. The majority of the articles ultimately prove that intrinsic motivation to exercise has varying approaches which should be applied individually and not as an all-encompassing

approach. While overall increase in the population's health may be the ultimate objective, the true progress appears to take place on an individual level. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and its application to fitness was the primary focus of most motivation-oriented research currently available, but there was also ample quantifiable data gathered from participants via empirical research practices, offering additional support. The studies that are referenced utilize many different data-gathering tools in their research including questionnaires, variable associations, bivariate correlations, and quantitative analyses of empirical studies.

Analyses from the first article listed in the review of literature showed that motivational regulations and physical activity levels do indeed differ across age groups, and quite substantially. This helped to effectively illustrate how important it is to consider traits like age when studying motivation to engage in physical activity. The association strengths varied in different age groups, and so it would be only logical for professionals to tailor intervention programs specifically to certain demographics where the impacts would be most substantial. Not only does this article offer an explanation to the first research question, but its conclusion answers the next two. "Findings highlight the importance of considering age when studying physical activity motivation since the strength of the associations between the motivational regulations and physical activity behavior varied across age groups. Identifying factors that influence intrinsic motivation and identified regulation for physical activity within each age segment is necessary to develop interventions to increase physical activity behavior across the lifespan. (Brunet & Sabiston, 2011)". The mere fact that the term "developed" was used rather than the word "implemented", is a testament to the general lack of understanding on the subject. It is fair to conclude that there wouldn't be this much research on how to improve motivation if there was already a strong comprehension of the subject.

Contrary to what many advertisements would suggest, it is ineffective to treat everyone's physiology and psychology with the same approach. There is no one size fits all method to promoting healthy habits or intrinsic motivation. Findings suggest that exercise regulations, with varying degrees of internalization, can differentially predict exercise behavior characteristics. "The influence that integration has on exercise behavior indicates that an individual's exercise-related identity can be influential in determining their exercise behavior. This finding points to the importance of measuring integrated regulation in an exercise context and the need for practitioners to develop programs that aim to enhance exercise-related identity in order to increase exercise participation among individuals (Duncan et. al., 2010)." In other words, everyone is motivated differently and responds to different types of motivational practices, a notion with which much of society has yet to familiarize itself with.

According to Grubbs and Cater, two Ph.Ds. in the field of exercise science, healthy exercise habits yield marked improvements in quality of life. What these experts are saying is that by promoting healthy exercise and diet habits, the overall welfare of current and future generations will be enhanced. Learning about how important exercise is, and how to tap into its benefits, could undoubtedly yield positive outcomes for virtually all members of society. The most recent review conducted by Mears in 2018, included 66 empirical studies published up to June 2011 which, through quantitative analyses, showed evidence of a positive relationship between the more autonomous forms of motivation and exercise, with a trend towards identified regulation predicting initial/short-term adoption more strongly than intrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation being more predictive of long-term exercise adherence. These 66 studies, in addition to the articles compiled in this research, all provide more than enough information to answer each of the three research questions in the affirmative.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to prove that, with regard to exercise motivation, different demographics of people do indeed respond uniquely to particular approaches. The articles collected for this research collectively suggest a widespread lack of understanding concerning motivational principles and tactics. The literature was also effective in showing that a more robust collective comprehension of the subject would inevitably yield positive outcomes for American communities' overall health and fitness.

Overall, the main findings pointed toward the fact that motivational stimuli must be adjusted on an individual basis in order to get the most effective results. This point strongly supports the primary arguments being made in this research. These results are remarkably consistent with my original hypotheses and explicitly highlight the importance of understanding how motivational tactics vary in effectiveness from person to person.

This study may seem like relatively small-scale research at first glance, but its potential implications are immeasurable. Just taking the time to learn the fundamentals about motivation to exercise and specifically, how to maximize it, could yield huge benefits for countless people struggling with their health. By understanding how critical it is to consider the role of self-determination and motivational tactics, there is bound to be a consequent increase in overall physical and even mental performance. The members of our community, for the most part, simply do not realize this. They do not understand that each human mind is a unique and flexible tool that can be hacked in a way that offers the most benefit to its owner. This lack of understanding is, of course, no fault of the individual, but rather an indicator that society has

some catching up to do with the most recent research. Science has taken huge strides over the past few years, particularly in psychology and sports medicine. If more fitness influencers and medical professionals took the time to dismiss the “bro science” and embrace the natural science, not only would their clients experience better results, but their work would set the tone for future professionals. People simply do not have the time to learn the ins and outs of psychology, neuroplasticity, and fitness science. They place their trust in trainers and medical professionals to provide them with sound advice which is why it is up to us to be the pioneers of this new age in fitness, spreading truth and fact, not folly. Medical professionals have a duty to their patients. Trainers have a responsibility to their clients. Coaches have an obligation to their athletes, and most importantly, we all have a commitment to ourselves. These breakthroughs are a chance for the world to enhance the way it approaches physical fitness. Would not it be in the best interest of those being trained to have a training plan that is tailored to their personality? Even if someone was not offering advice for noble reasons and was only in it for monetary gain, would it not be prudent to provide the highest quality services so as to recruit and retain more customers? Informing the public and ourselves on the how to properly motivate oneself is a win-win situation for all parties, except maybe the healthcare industry who would undoubtedly see a dip in patient obesity/mortality rates.

From a clinical standpoint, adopting these principles could make treating other underlying conditions far easier for physicians. It is a well-known fact that ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity can be mitigated, if not completely reversed, by adopting healthier fitness habits. These principles are a huge potential tool for healthcare professionals to use in treating their patients. It is no different from using a new type of drug that helps get the job done faster, except that these benefits are not coming from an exogenous source but are instigated

internally. I have always been an advocate of the old adage that “medicine is not just about postponing death... it is about increasing the quality of life”. As an aspiring physician in sports medicine, this is a principle I intend to live by in my practice.

This study was, of course, limited by the fact that it was strictly qualitative. It did not necessarily produce any new data, but rather, it aimed to synthesize multiple sources of data in a manner that supported my primary hypotheses. There is unlimited potential for future research on this subject. With all of the measurable medical data that can be gathered from a participant, there are innumerable ways to gauge effectiveness. By applying different motivational techniques to various groups versus a control, huge breakthroughs can be made. By identifying exactly which motivational tactics are best for a particular desired result, we can isolate specific practices, conditions, and variables in a way that offers a more precise understanding of how to manipulate the brain to our benefit.

## **Conclusion**

A person’s motivation to train is, without a doubt, one of the most vitally essential factors of just about any exercise regimen. Regardless of whether one’s goal is to lose body fat, increase lean muscle mass, gain strength, boost speed, or just promote overall health and wellness, that person must be motivated to put in the labor necessary to bear a fruitful outcome. Society spends far too much time focusing on what to do in the gym and not nearly enough time discussing what it takes to get oneself into the gym in the first place. While education on the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle is undoubtedly helpful in capturing people’s attention, it does not provide a starting point for people to work from. It especially does not give solid grounds for consistency down the line. The starting point, in this case, is the motivation to exercise. Once one is intrinsically motivated to achieve a particular goal, it is far easier for that person to experience

success in that area. In proving that the general population is not as informed on the matter as it should be, this research may help propel this discussion to the forefront of the fitness world, hopefully changing it for the better. The classic saying of “mind over matter” is a cliché for a reason... because it is true. By unlocking the mysteries of our psychology, humanity would almost certainly be propelled to whole new levels of physical fitness. With our community experiencing such favorable increases in its overall health, who knows what other matters humanity could focus on?

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