

YOUUnite

Sports Module

Holistic Programme Fostering The Integration of Overweight and Adipose Youth Into the Labour market

HEY,
I'm doing
sports!

HEY,
I'm getting
healthier!

HEY,
I'm prepared!



About the YOUnite training programme

This module was developed in the context of the ERASMUS+ co-funded YOUnite project, executed from October 2022 to October 2024, which brought together five organisations from Austria, Finland, Hungary, and Poland to collaboratively address challenges faced by youth with obesity and overweight with a special focus on their labour market integration. It is part of the YOUnite training programme, consisting of six modules covering Health/Medical aspects, Nutrition, Sports, Stress Management, Awareness, and Employment. Each Module targets essential aspects of managing obesity and overweight and promoting overall well-being. The Health/Medical aspects and Nutrition Modules provide basic knowledge for making informed dietary and lifestyle choices. The Sports Module encourages physical activity in a supportive environment. Stress Management and Awareness address mental health and coping strategies. Employment focuses on enhancing employability and addressing workplace discrimination, empowering youth to enter the labour market confidently and successfully. Together, these Modules offer a comprehensive toolkit for trainers, teachers, and youth workers and counsellors to support and empower young individuals to take the first steps in their journey towards a healthier, more balanced life.

The YOUnite training programme was designed in such a way that its components can be used very flexibly: Either by implementing the whole programme or only specific modules or activities. Thus, the modules can accommodate very diverse training environments. For each module, there is a module activity paper and instructions for trainers. These documents form an entity and should thus be consulted together. To ensure that the developed training is both effective and comprehensive, working groups were established in each country, bringing together experts from diverse fields, including doctors, medical workers, nutritionists, cooks, employment counsellors, youth workers, athletes, teachers, and psychologists. These experts shared their insights, helping to shape activities tailored to the unique needs of the target group.

Based on the outcomes of the working groups, a draft training programme for youth was developed and the partners conducted train-the-trainers events to equip future trainers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively deliver the new training. These trainers then led pilot sessions with youth where the modules were tested and refined through practical application. The iterative process of testing and refining allowed us to gather valuable feedback from trainers as well as young people themselves, make necessary adjustments, and confirm that the modules were both practical and impactful. The focus on disadvantaged youth ensures that those who need it most receive the support and guidance to adopt healthier lifestyles and improve their future employability.

Focusing on obesity is crucial given its alarming prevalence and far-reaching consequences. According to the World Health Organization, as of 2022, approximately 20% of children and adolescents (aged 5-19) worldwide are affected by obesity or being overweight (World Health Organization). This growing epidemic is not only a significant public health concern but also a burden on societies and public health systems. Obesity among youth is linked to numerous negative outcomes, including increased risks of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health issues. These health problems often persist into adulthood, contributing to higher healthcare costs and economic strain. Additionally, obesity can impact quality of life, academic performance, and employment prospects, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage. Tackling obesity is essential not only to improve individual health outcomes but also to reduce the economic burden on public funds and enhance overall societal well-being.

Addressing obesity requires a multifaceted approach, underscored by comprehensive health education. This involves implementing preventive measures and treatment strategies to counteract the pervasive effects of overweight and obesity, while raising awareness about balanced nutrition, consistent physical activity, mental wellness, and stress management. The YOUnite training programme takes a significant first step in this direction, particularly for disadvantaged youth who are further away from the labour market and have not previously engaged with the subject of healthy life habits.



Introduction: What is the goal of the Sports Module and how is it relevant for a healthier lifestyle?

Physical activity, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses all bodily movements driven by skeletal muscles, requiring energy expenditure. This definition underscores the inclusion of not only structured sports activities but also routine tasks like household chores or commuting. It's crucial to distinguish physical activity from exercise; while they overlap, the former encompasses a broader spectrum of movements integral to daily life.

Clinical evidence strongly supports the efficacy of combining a balanced diet with regular physical activity to combat obesity. Even small bouts of exercise prove beneficial compared to sedentary lifestyles.

Modern society's sedentary tendencies contrast sharply with our ancestors' more active lifestyles, resulting in a caloric imbalance that contributes to obesity, particularly among young adults. Technological advancements, coupled with urbanisation, have led to decreased physical exertion and increased caloric consumption. Increased use of mobile telephones and computers, reliance on public transportation, and reduced outdoor activities further exacerbate sedentary behaviours.

Regular physical activity yields multifaceted benefits beyond weight management. It reduces body fat, enhances muscle and bone mass, improves glucose tolerance, lowers blood pressure, and boosts both physical and mental well-being. Incorporating moderate-intensity physical activity for at least thirty minutes daily is recommended for optimal health.

For overweight and obese individuals, exercise serves as a catalyst for weight loss, reducing body fat while increasing muscle mass and improving overall fitness. It also addresses emotional well-being by reducing stress and enhancing mood. However, exercising safely and effectively requires proper planning, individualised programmes, and attention to technique to avoid injuries, particularly among people who are not used to physical activity.

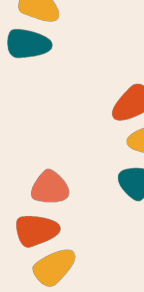
General conditioning exercises, such as walking, cycling, and water aerobics, are safer options for beginners or for example those with joint issues. These activities offer numerous physical health benefits, including improved cardiovascular function, muscle development, and weight control (WHO, 2018).

Beyond physical health, sports participation fosters psychological resilience by bolstering self-esteem and combating negative body image perceptions. It can provide a platform for social interaction and teamwork, countering feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of belonging.

The Sports Module is designed to provide youth with obesity and overweight the opportunity to engage in physical activity in a safe, supportive, and enjoyable environment. This module focuses on fostering a positive relationship with exercise and physical activities, emphasising the benefits of physical activity for overall health and well-being rather than just weight loss. By offering activities that cater to different fitness levels, the activities are designed to build confidence, improve physical fitness, and enhance self-esteem. Through a holistic approach that integrates education, motivation, and behavioural support, the Sports Module encourages participants to develop healthy, sustainable habits.

Key objectives of the module include:

Knowledge and Awareness: Participants will gain a clear understanding of the importance of physical activity in maintaining health and managing conditions like obesity. They will learn about the various benefits of regular exercise, including its positive effects on mental well-being, mood regulation, and anxiety reduction. The module emphasises the integration of these activities into daily routines, highlighting how physical activity can become a natural part of their lives.



Social and Interpersonal Skills: The module will also stress the social benefits of physical activity, showing how it can foster meaningful connections and strengthen relationships through team sports and group activities.

Goal Setting: Youth will understand the importance of setting clear, achievable goals related to sports and exercise. They will learn how to create actionable plans to reach these goals, fostering a sense of purpose and direction in their physical development.

Personal interest and motivation: Youth will learn to identify their own preferences, interests, and strengths in sports, allowing them to tailor physical activity to their individual needs. This includes developing the ability to customise routines to fit their capabilities, ensuring that exercise is both enjoyable and sustainable.

Routine Establishment and Self-Image: The module will provide strategies for establishing and maintaining routine and motivation in being physically active. By setting personal goals, aligning activities with their interests, and developing routines, youth can build a strong foundation for continued physical activity.

Empowerment and Personal Growth: The module empowers youth to take charge of their health by setting and pursuing their own fitness goals. This fosters autonomy, resilience, and a proactive mindset, which can be applied to all areas of their lives.

What are the issues addressed?

The activities directly address obesity and overweight by offering a range of engaging and accessible options. These activities encourage youth to set personal goals related to physical activities and exercise, such as hiking, walking, or trying out new sports. By creating structured plans and identifying specific physical activities they enjoy, participants are motivated to incorporate regular exercise into their daily lives. This is crucial for managing and preventing obesity, as consistent physical activity helps burn calories, improve cardiovascular health, and build muscle mass.

Moreover, activities like hiking and walking offer low-impact exercise options suitable for various fitness levels. By promoting these accessible forms of physical activity, participants can easily integrate movement into their routines. For instance, using a pedometer app to track steps or choosing to take the stairs instead of the elevator are small yet impactful habits that can lead to significant improvements in weight management and overall fitness.

The activities also play a crucial role in boosting self-esteem and mental well-being. By setting and achieving personal goals in sports or physical activities, youth gain a sense of ownership and control over their physical development. This sense of accomplishment fosters self-confidence and a positive self-image. Engaging in physical activities, particularly those set in natural environments, further enhances mood, reduces stress, and increases energy levels, contributing to overall mental well-being.

In addition to promoting physical activity, these activities provide practical strategies to help youth cope with and address overweight and obesity. The structured framework for goal-setting and the emphasis on small, achievable steps empower participants to take control of their health. By promoting self-awareness and accountability, youth learn to identify and overcome barriers to physical activity, such as lack of motivation or time constraints. The supportive group environment further aids in this process, offering encouragement and reducing the stigma often associated with obesity.



By fostering a positive relationship with physical activity and promoting mindfulness, these activities equip youth with the tools they need to manage their weight and overall health effectively.

Beyond the direct health benefits, these activities also prepare youth for success in the labour market. The skills developed through goal-setting, perseverance, and teamwork in sports are also relevant in professional environments. Regular physical activity is linked to improved cognitive function, concentration, and productivity, all of which are valuable in academic and work-related settings.

What special skills do trainers need for this module?

Trainers in the sports module should possess at least a basic understanding of physical fitness, including how to tailor activities to individual needs and capabilities. Strong communication skills are essential to clearly convey the importance of regular exercise, motivate participants, and foster a supportive group environment. Trainers should also be adept at goal-setting techniques, helping youth define and achieve personal objectives while maintaining enthusiasm and commitment. Additionally, they need to cultivate a positive, encouraging atmosphere that empowers participants, enhances self-esteem, and promotes long-term adherence to a healthy, active lifestyle.

List of Activities

1. Fit for the Future
2. Hike to Health
3. Playful Explorations
4. Snap & Seek
5. Footsteps to Fitness
6. Workout Identity
7. Mind-Body Boost

1. Fit for the Future

Time required	Around 1 hour
Type of activity	Workshop
Key takeaway	Participants will learn to set and pursue personal goals in sports and exercise that align with their interests, establish disciplined routines, strengthen their self-image, and empower them to take control of their physical development and overall well-being.
Worksheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Goal-Setting Process - handout</u>• <u>Personal Goal work workshop: Discussion Prompts</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Papers/notebooks• Pens• Optional: laptop and projector for inspirational examples

Overview

In this individual-based workshop, participants are guided to create their own plans and goals for physical activity and sports. The session begins with group discussions, where participants explore their interests, aspirations, and desired levels of engagement. The emphasis is placed on the significance of fun and enjoyment in sports, allowing participants to establish personal interests and motivations. Through guided conversations, participants identify the necessary steps to achieve their goals, while also reflecting on their initial sporting experiences and considering ways to strengthen their self-image. The workshop aims to foster the establishment and maintenance of routines, helping participants develop a positive self-perception and strengthen their commitment to regular physical activity.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity

Preparations

- Familiarise yourself with the topic: Review information and resources on sports, exercise, and goal setting strategies on the instruction for trainers documents.
- Gather relevant resources by collecting examples of sports activities, fitness routines, and success stories that can inspire and motivate participants. These resources can be shared during the workshop to provide ideas and stimulate discussion.
- Set up visual aids: Prepare any visuals, charts, or Youtube videos related to goal setting and sports that you plan to present during the workshop.
- Arrange a comfortable and spacious area for the workshop. Set up tables and chairs, ensuring everyone has enough space to work and engage in discussions.

Workshop steps

1. Introduction (10 minutes)
 - Welcome participants and introduce the purpose of the workshop. Emphasise the importance of personal goals, sports, and physical activity in their lives.
 - Optional: Inspirational Examples (10 minutes):
 - Share examples or success stories related to sports and goal achievement.
 - Inspire participants by demonstrating the positive impact of personal growth through sports.
2. Group Discussions and Reflection on Initial Sporting Experiences (10 minutes)
 - Encourage participants to reflect on their initial sporting experiences.
 - Discuss how these experiences have shaped their perceptions and attitudes toward sports.
 - Facilitate group discussions on personal interests, aspirations, and desired levels of engagement in sports.
3. Goal Setting (10 minutes)
 - Introduce the concept of goal setting (SMART) and its relevance in the context of sports and exercise.
 - Distribute the related worksheet for participants to define clear objectives and create actionable plans.
4. Creating Action Plans (15 minutes)
 - Guide participants in identifying the necessary steps to achieve their goals.
 - Emphasise the significance of establishing and maintaining routines for success.
5. Sharing and Discussion (15 minutes)
 - Allow participants to share their goals and action plans with the group.
 - Foster a supportive environment for feedback and discussion.
6. Conclusion and Next Steps (10 minutes)
 - Summarise key takeaways from the workshop.
 - Encourage participants to implement their action plans and commit to regular physical activity.



2. Hike to Health

Time required	Around 3 hours, depending on the hiking route
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	Through this outdoor activity, youth will improve their physical fitness while enjoying nature, develop teamwork skills, grow personally and build resilience, reduce stress, and experience the satisfaction of setting and achieving goals.
Worksheet	<i>Not applicable for this activity</i>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiking Gear: Participants will need appropriate hiking gear, including comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots, weather-appropriate clothing (layers, rain jacket, hat), sunscreen, and a backpack to carry essentials such as water, snacks, and personal items.• Navigation Tools: Depending on the hiking location and trail difficulty, participants/ trainers may require navigation tools such as a map, compass, or GPS device. It is essential to familiarise yourself with the trail map and have a clear understanding of the route.• Food and Water: Carry an adequate supply of water to stay hydrated throughout the hike. Additionally, pack nutritious snacks or light meals to fuel the participants during the activity. Consider options like trail mix, fresh fruit, healthy sandwiches, or wraps.• First Aid Kit: Prepare a basic first aid kit with essential items such as band-aids, adhesive tape, antiseptic wipes, pain relievers, blister pads, and any necessary personal medications. Ensure someone in the group is familiar with basic first aid procedures.

Overview

This activity is designed to help overweight and obese youth integrate enjoyable and accessible physical exercise into their life by introducing them to low-threshold, fun, and inclusive activities suitable for all fitness levels. The main idea is to use hiking as an entry point to a more active lifestyle, providing an engaging and non-intimidating way for participants to break free from sedentary habits and experience the health benefits of regular physical activity.

During the activity, participants will embark on a hike in a natural setting, if the location allows, encouraging them to step outside and enjoy a refreshing change from their usual routines. The hike is intended to be a multi-sensory adventure, with participants experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of nature, which helps to make the exercise more enjoyable and engaging.

To further enhance the experience, the hike may be combined with an additional fun activity, such as berry picking or grilling sausages, adding a sense of purpose and enjoyment to the physical movement. Participants can also set step count goals and, if available, use smartwatches to track their progress, making the experience interactive and goal-oriented.

The overall goal of the activity is to make exercise a positive and achievable experience, fostering a connection with nature and promoting a healthier, more active lifestyle among obese youth.

Step by step instructions to conduct the activity

1. Preparations

- Research and Select the Hiking Trail: Identify suitable hiking trails in the area that match the participants' fitness levels and interests. Consider factors such as trail length, difficulty level, elevation gain, and natural surroundings. Ensure the trail is open and accessible during the planned activity date.
- Communicate and Gather Participant Information: Share information about the planned hike, including the trail details, expected duration, difficulty level, and any specific requirements or recommendations. Collect essential participant information such as emergency contact numbers, medical conditions, allergies, or dietary restrictions.
- Pack Essentials: Prior to the activity, ensure all participants have the necessary hiking gear and equipment. Encourage them to check the weather forecast and dress accordingly. Remind participants to pack their water bottles, healthy snacks, and any personal items required for the hike.
- Confirm Transportation: Arrange transportation to and from the hiking location if needed. Coordinate carpooling or provide instructions for public transportation options, ensuring all participants have a clear understanding of the meeting point and departure time.

2. Introduction and Goal Setting

- Start the activity by welcoming the participants and introducing the purpose of the outing, which is to explore nature together and engage in physical activity.
- Instruct them to use smartphones/ other devices for step counting / other resources for goal setting.

3. Safety Briefing

- Conduct a safety briefing before starting the hike. Discuss the importance of staying together as a group, following trail markers, maintaining personal safety, and adhering to Leave No Trace principles. Emphasise the need to respect nature, wildlife, and other hikers.

4. Hiking and Nature Exploration

- Begin the hike, following the chosen trail. Maintain a comfortable pace suitable for all participants and consider taking breaks at designated spots or scenic viewpoints. Encourage participants to engage with the natural surroundings by pointing out interesting flora, fauna, or geological features along the way. Foster a sense of adventure and curiosity by encouraging participants to ask questions, share observations, and take photos or notes of their experiences.
- Do some berry picking or grill sausages if place is suitable for that

5. Debriefing and Evaluation

- Conclude the hike at the predetermined endpoint or return to the starting point. Gather the participants for a debriefing session to reflect on their experiences. Ask open-ended questions to encourage discussion and feedback. Discuss what participants enjoyed about the hike, any challenges they faced, and how they overcame them. Encourage participants to share their accomplishments and personal highlights. Facilitate a discussion on the benefits of spending time in nature, the importance of physical activity, and how the experience relates to their personal goals and well-being.
- Provide resources or recommendations for participants to continue exploring nature and engaging in physical activity in their daily lives.



3. Playful Explorations

Time required	Around 3 hours
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	By exploring a variety of sports and engaging in enjoyable, memorable activities, youth will broaden their understanding of physical exercise, foster a positive attitude towards regular activity, and reflect on personal barriers and motivations, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and commitment to staying active.
Worksheet	<i>Not applicable for this activity</i>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper and pens (or any other voting method)• Necessary equipment and supplies for each sport selected. This may include sports equipment, safety gear, and any specific requirements for each activity.

Overview

This activity is designed to help overweight and obese youth integrate enjoyable and accessible physical exercise into their life by introducing them to low-threshold, fun, and inclusive activities suitable for all fitness levels. The main idea is to use hiking as an entry point to a more active lifestyle, providing an engaging and non-intimidating way for participants to break free from sedentary habits and experience the health benefits of regular physical activity.

During the activity, participants will embark on a hike in a natural setting, if the location allows, encouraging them to step outside and enjoy a refreshing change from their usual routines. The hike is intended to be a multi-sensory adventure, with participants experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of nature, which helps to make the exercise more enjoyable and engaging.

To further enhance the experience, the hike may be combined with an additional fun activity, such as berry picking or grilling sausages, adding a sense of purpose and enjoyment to the physical movement. Participants can also set step count goals and, if available, use smartwatches to track their progress, making the experience interactive and goal-oriented.

The overall goal of the activity is to make exercise a positive and achievable experience, fostering a connection with nature and promoting a healthier, more active lifestyle among obese youth.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Preparations

- Identify a suitable venue or location for the activity that can accommodate the group size and the chosen sports.
- Ensure you have the necessary equipment and supplies for each sport selected. This may include sports equipment, safety gear, and any specific requirements for each activity.
- Prepare a list of potential sports options that the group can choose from. Include both conventional and unconventional sports, as well as modified versions of familiar sports.

2. Introduction

- Gather the participants and provide a brief overview of the activity's objective: to explore different sports options and broaden their view of physical activity.
- Explain the concept of trying new sports or modified versions of familiar sports to make exercise more engaging and enjoyable.
- Emphasise the importance of having fun and being open-minded during the activity.

3. Sports Selection

- Allow the participants to suggest sports they would like to try. Encourage creativity and variety in their suggestions. You can also present the list of potential sports options you prepared earlier.
- Discuss the rules and requirements of each sport briefly.
- Facilitate a group discussion or vote to select the sports the group will try. Consider choosing a few sports based on popularity and feasibility within the available time.

4. Organizing Sports Activities

- Divide the participants into smaller groups, ensuring each group has a balanced mix of skills and abilities.
- Assign a different sport to each group based on their preferences or carry out the activity as one group.
- Provide clear instructions and demonstrations for each sport, highlighting any modifications or twists to the rules.
- Supervise and support the groups as they engage in the chosen sports, ensuring safety and fair play.
- Allow each group sufficient time to practise and engage in the selected sport(s). Encourage active participation and provide guidance or assistance as needed.
- Foster a supportive and inclusive environment, emphasising teamwork, cooperation, and fair play.
- Capture memorable moments through photos or videos to commemorate the experience and create positive memories.

5. Post-Activity Discussion

- Gather the participants for a post-activity discussion session.
- Prompt a reflection on the exercise experience, asking questions such as: How did the exercise feel? What were the personal barriers to exercise encountered? Were these barriers valid? How did the positive memories of the activity contribute to the overall experience?
- Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences openly, fostering a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere.
- Facilitate a discussion on how exercise can be fun and creative, and how participants can incorporate enjoyable physical activities into their lives.

6. Wrap-up and Conclusion

- Express appreciation to the participants for their active involvement and willingness to try new sports.
- Summarise the key takeaways from the activity, including the importance of finding enjoyable forms of exercise and challenging personal barriers to physical activity.
- Encourage participants to continue exploring different sports options, staying physically active, and maintaining a positive attitude towards exercise.

4. Snap & Seek

Time required	Around 3 hours
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	The activity encourages physical movement and exploration in a fun, team-oriented way, helping participants engage with their environment, develop problem-solving skills, and reflect on their experiences, all while fostering a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment.
Worksheet	<i>Not applicable for this activity</i>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 physical cards with one task each for each group (alternative trainer can do digital cards) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Examples of tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take a photo of your team in the oldest church in the city. ▪ Take a photo of your team in front of a brick building, skyscraper, soccer stadium, business university, etc.... ▪ Take a photo of your team with a dog, chestnut tree, etc. ▪ Take a photo of your team in front of a city landmark. ▪ Take a photo of your team with a tourist, a cyclist, etc. ▪ Take a photo of your team at a fruit stand/bicycle shop/football field. ▪ Take a photo of your team at one of your favourite places..... • Phone with a camera • Ticket for public transportation for each participants (optional) • Water bottle and healthy snack for each participant

Overview

The activity is a scavenger hunt where participants explore their environment by finding and photographing specific motifs in the city or countryside. It combines physical activity with exploration, teamwork, and problem-solving in a fun and engaging way.

Participants are divided into small groups and are tasked with locating various designated motifs or landmarks around the city or rural area. They plan their route and transportation in advance, encouraging them to brainstorm strategies for reaching their destinations. As they search for these items, they naturally engage in physical movement and exploration without focusing explicitly on exercise. After collecting their photographs, the groups reconvene to share their images and experiences. A group discussion, moderated by the trainer, follows, where participants reflect on their discoveries, teamwork, and the overall experience. The scavenger hunt's intensity and duration can be tailored to suit different settings and group needs.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Preparations (30 minutes):

- The trainer thinks about the tasks for the teams based on the location (examples above)
- Write each task on small cards and make sure you have enough cards for the activity

2. Team Formation (10 minutes):

- Randomly allocate participants into small teams
- Ensure a mix of personalities and encourage positive collaboration.

3. Task Distribution and Planning (20 minutes):

- Distribute the task cards to each team (5 tasks per team).
- Each team has 15 minutes to plan where they can find the motifs and how they will reach each location using public transportation.

4. Briefing and Snacks (5 minutes)

- Provide participants with water and snacks
- Make sure they have contact information for the trainer in case they are lost or need help

5. Independent Exploration (1-2 hours, depending on location):

- Teams set out independently to explore the city, solving tasks and taking photos along the way.
- Encourage walking and the use of public transportation during the tasks.

6. Photo Collection and Reflection (45 minutes)

- Participants gather to review their photos together.
 - Trainer can gather photos during the independent exploration and can ask participants to share photos when they are taking them.
 - Trainer collects all photos electronically or in a PowerPoint so that they can be shared with the group during the group discussion.

7. Discuss the experience

- Example questions: What was fun? Was it exhausting? Can you share a specific moment that stands out as particularly enjoyable? Did you discover any unexpected or interesting things about your city during the scavenger hunt? How did the physical activity aspect impact your experience? Were there any physical challenges or achievements during the hunt? Which task was the most challenging, and how did your team approach it? Did you feel a sense of accomplishment when completing certain tasks? How could this experience be adapted or improved for future groups? In what ways do you think this activity has positively impacted your well-being? Would you recommend a similar activity to others based on your experience?



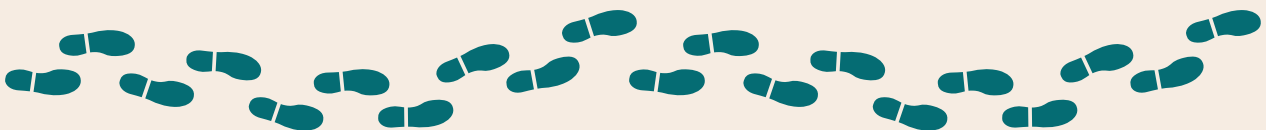
5. Footsteps to Fitness

Time required	Day 1 - 1 hour Everyday - Tracking Last Day - 1 hour
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	By tracking their daily steps and setting achievable goals, participants learn the importance of incorporating regular physical activity into their lives, fostering a sense of accomplishment, teamwork, and motivation to lead a healthier lifestyle
Worksheet	<i>Not applicable for this activity</i>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile phones

Overview

This activity is designed to help participants to understand the importance of regular physical activity and how it can be easily integrated into daily life to combat overweight and obesity and improve overall well-being.

Participants first learn about the importance of regular exercise in combating obesity and improving health. They then download the app (can be any step calculating app such as Step Counter - Pedometer or Apple Health) and spend a day tracking their steps to understand their current activity levels. By using a pedometer app to track their steps, participants gain insight into their current activity levels and are motivated to increase their physical activity in a supportive group environment. As a group, they set a collective step goal to be achieved over a set period, fostering teamwork and mutual motivation. Throughout the activity, participants continue to monitor their progress, with regular check-ins and discussions. The activity concludes with a reflection on their achievements and a small reward if the group goal is met.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

Day 1: Introduction and App Setup (1 hour)

1. Introduction to Obesity and Physical Activity:
 - Begin with a discussion on the factors contributing to overweight and obesity, including environmental influences, genetic predisposition, and lifestyle habits.
 - Highlight the importance of regular physical activity, particularly walking, as a simple and effective way to maintain health.
2. Discussion on Step Estimation:
 - Ask participants to estimate how many steps they take each day. Encourage them to reflect on their current activity levels and routines.
3. App Selection and Download:
 - Introduce the concept of using a pedometer app to track steps.
 - Guide participants in downloading a pedometer app on their mobile phones.
4. App Setup:
 - Assist participants in setting up their apps, ensuring that everyone understands how to use the app to track their steps.

Day 2: Step Tracking (Full Day)

1. Track Daily Steps:
 - Instruct participants to go about their day as usual, while keeping their pedometer app active to track their steps.
 - Encourage them to be mindful of their activity levels and look for opportunities to increase their step count, such as taking the stairs or walking instead of driving short distances.

Day 3: Group Discussion and Goal Setting (15 minutes)

1. Group Reflection on Step Counts:
 - Gather participants to discuss the number of steps they recorded the previous day.
 - Facilitate a conversation about their observations, challenges, and any surprises regarding their activity levels.
2. Set a Group Step Goal:
 - Based on the individual step counts, work with the group to set a collective step goal for the remaining duration of the workshop.
 - Ensure that the goal is realistic but challenging enough to motivate the group. For example, if there are 8 participants, they might aim for a combined total of 336,000 steps over two weeks.
3. Plan for Increased Activity:
 - Brainstorm ways participants can increase their daily steps, such as incorporating walking breaks, choosing longer routes, or organising group walks.
 -

Last Day of Training: Final Reflection and Reward (15 minutes)

1. Anonymously Record Step Totals:
 - Ask participants to anonymously write down the total number of steps they've taken during the workshop on a small card.
 - Collect the cards and tally the total steps to see if the group met their goal.
2. Group Reflection:
 - Discuss the results with the group, reflecting on the experience of tracking steps, the benefits of increased physical activity, and how they can continue these habits beyond the workshop.
3. Celebrate Achievements:
 - If the group reached their step goal, celebrate with a small reward, such as healthy snacks.
 - Conclude by encouraging participants to keep up with their newfound habits and continue setting personal activity goals.

6. Workout Identity

Time required	Around 1 hour
Type of activity	Workshop
Key takeaway	Participants will gain insight into their personal relationship with exercise and learn what type of exerciser they are, helping them understand the types of physical activities that best suit their motivation and goals.
Worksheet	<u>Exercise types PPT</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projector and computer/laptop to show the PPT• Mobile phones/computers for participants to fill out the test

Overview

During this activity the participants learn about different types of exercisers. Participants learn that exercise is not the same for everyone. While for some it is important to achieve pre-set goals, others want to move however they want and others are motivated by competition and the experience of competence. Each person has their own personal relationship with sport, based on their own experiences of sport and physical activity. This relationship determines what a person wants from sport and what kind of sport motivates them.

During the activity participants fill out the test to discover what type of exerciser they are. Powerpoint helps the trainer to teach about different types of exercisers and it includes some question points to reflect different experiences that have shaped one's exerciser type and to consider what types of physical activity would be suitable for each type.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Briefly introduce the workshop and its objectives.
- Explain that the goal is to understand the different types of exercisers and how personal experiences shape one's relationship with physical activity.
- Highlight that exercise is not one-size-fits-all, and everyone has unique motivations and preferences.

2. Filling Out the Test (15 minutes)

- Ask participants to use their mobile phones or computers to fill out the provided test that determines their exerciser type.
- Be available to assist with any questions or technical issues during this time.

3. PowerPoint Presentation (20 minutes)

- Display the Exercise Types PPT on the whiteboard.
- Walk participants through each slide, elaborating on the characteristics, motivations, and suitable types of physical activity for each exerciser type.
- Pose reflection questions from the PPT to the group, encouraging participants to think about their own experiences with exercise.

4. Discussion (5 minutes)

- Facilitate a short discussion based on the reflection questions.
- Encourage participants to share their thoughts on which exercise type they resonate with and why.

5. Final Thoughts & Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Summarise the key takeaways from the workshop.
- Reinforcing that understanding one's exercise type can help in selecting the most enjoyable and sustainable physical activities.
- Thank participants for their involvement and encourage them to apply their insights to their fitness routines.



7. Mind- Body Boost

Time required	Around 1 hour
Type of activity	Action Based Activity
Key takeaway	Regular physical activity is a powerful tool for managing stress, as it helps release tension, improve mood, and promote overall mental and physical well-being.
Worksheet	<u>How Exercise Reduces Stress and Promotes Relaxation</u>
Other materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise mats• Speaker or music player• Timer or stopwatch• Comfortable clothing

Overview

This is a dynamic activity designed to help youth manage stress through a blend of physical exercises and mental relaxation techniques. This session is both engaging and educational, aiming to reduce stress by releasing tension, boosting mood, and fostering relaxation. Participants will not only experience the immediate benefits of physical activity on their stress levels but will also learn about the connection between exercise and mental well-being. The session equips them with practical tools to manage stress effectively, contributing to their overall mental and physical health.

During the session, participants start with a warm-up, followed by a series of guided exercises including deep breathing, yoga, Pilates, and cardio. These activities are designed to relax the mind, strengthen the body, and release endorphins. The session concludes with a cool-down period to help participants wind down and a recap of the benefits of incorporating these exercises into daily life.



Step by step instructions to conduct the activity:

1. Introduction and Overview (5 mins)

- Welcome participants and introduce the session's goal: using physical activity to relieve stress.

2. Theoretical session on psychological effects of stress (15 mins)

- Conduct an informative session on the psychological effects of stress, highlighting how exercise can alleviate stress. Discuss how stress can lead to anxiety, irritability, difficulty in focusing, disrupted sleep patterns, and mood disorders (see handout)

3. Warm-Up (5 mins)

- Explain the importance of warming up to prevent injuries and prepare the body for exercise. Lead participants through light jogging or dynamic stretches to get started.

4. Guided Workouts:

- Deep Breathing Exercise (5 min):
 - Guide participants to find a comfortable seated or lying position. Lead them through deep breathing exercises, emphasising deep inhalation through the nose, a brief hold, and slow exhalation through the mouth to promote relaxation.
- Yoga Flow (15 min):
 - Lead a series of yoga poses focused on relaxation. Make sure the poses are suitable for people with all sizes. Find examples [here](#). Encourage participants to synchronise their breath with each pose, fostering calmness and focus.
- Pilates Strengthening (10 minutes):
 - Engage participants in pilates exercises that target the core muscles while promoting concentration and mindfulness. Include beginner friendly exercises and find examples [here](#).
- Cardio Burst (10 minutes):
 - Incorporate cardio workouts such as jumping jacks, high knees, or jogging in place to increase heart rate and release endorphins. Emphasise the fun aspect and encourage participants to move freely.
 - Demonstration: Show participants each exercise, emphasising correct form and breathing techniques.
 - Engagement: Guide participants through a series of exercises targeting both body and mind.
 - Introduce Variations: Offer modifications for different fitness levels to ensure inclusivity.
 - Motivation: Encourage participants, keep energy levels high, and create a fun, stress-free environment.
- Cool Down (5 mins)
 - Gradually ease the group from the workout to a calmer state. Lead gentle stretches and relaxation exercises to wind down.

5. Debriefing and Closing (10 mins)

- Gather participants for a brief debriefing session. Begin by asking how they are feeling physically and emotionally after the activity. Encourage them to share any specific thoughts or reflections on their experience. Use open-ended questions like, "What was the most enjoyable part of today's session?" or "Did you notice any changes in your stress levels before and after the workout?"
- Facilitate a discussion on how the physical activities impacted their mood and energy levels, allowing participants to express any emotions or observations.
- Remind participants of the stress-relieving benefits of the workout. Thank participants for joining and recap key takeaway points. Encourage participants to hydrate and continue practising stress-relief techniques.

Worksheets for Sport Module Activities





Fit for the Future: Goal-Setting Process

Goal Title:

SMART Goal:

1. Specific: _____
2. Measurable: _____
3. Achievable: _____
4. Relevant: _____
5. Time-bound: _____

Action Steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Tracking Progress:

- What progress have you made towards your goal?
- Are there any challenges or obstacles you've encountered?
- How will you adjust your plan to overcome these challenges?

Deadlines:

- By when will you complete each action step?

Potential Obstacles:

- What obstacles or challenges you might you encounter?
- How will you address these obstacles?

Solutions:

- What strategies can you implement to overcome obstacles?
- Who can provide support or assistance if needed?
- By utilizing these worksheets and templates, participants can effectively set goals, create action plans, and track progress towards achieving their desired outcomes. These tools empower individuals to take control of their personal development and work towards realizing their aspirations with clarity and purpose.



Fit for Future: Discussion Prompts

Reflecting on Personal Interests:

- What sports or physical activities do you enjoy the most?
- How do these activities make you feel? What aspects do you find most rewarding?
- Have you ever set goals related to sports or exercise before? If so, what were they, and how did you work towards them?

Exploring Aspirations:

- What are your long-term aspirations or dreams related to sports and physical activity?
- How do you envision yourself participating in sports or staying active in the future?
- What motivates you to pursue these goals, and what challenges do you anticipate facing along the way?

Setting SMART Goals:

- What specific goals would you like to achieve in the realm of sports or physical activity?
- How can you make these goals SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)?
- What steps do you need to take to turn these goals into reality, and what resources or support do you require to succeed?

Overcoming Challenges:

- What obstacles or barriers do you foresee in achieving your goals, and how can you overcome them?
- How can you stay motivated and committed to your goals, especially when faced with setbacks or challenges?
- What strategies or resources can you leverage to maintain consistency and progress towards your goals?

Celebrating Successes:

- How will you celebrate your achievements and milestones along the way?
- What rewards or incentives can you set for yourself to stay motivated and engaged in your journey?
- How can you acknowledge and appreciate the progress you've made, regardless of the outcome?



How Exercise Reduces Stress and Promotes Relaxation

Rest and relaxation are often paired together as a key to unwinding, but exercise is an equally powerful way to relax. While it might seem counterintuitive since exercise is a form of physical stress, it can significantly alleviate mental stress when done correctly.

How Exercise Reduces Stress

Exercise, particularly aerobic exercise, is beneficial not only for your heart but also for your mental well-being. Initially, starting a workout routine might feel like a chore, but as your fitness improves, so will your enjoyment and reliance on exercise. Regular aerobic exercise brings about remarkable changes in your body, metabolism, heart, and mental state. It has a unique ability to both invigorate and relax, to provide stimulation and calmness, and to counteract depression and relieve stress. These benefits are well-documented among endurance athletes and have been confirmed in clinical trials treating anxiety and depression with exercise.

The Science Behind Exercise and Stress Relief

Exercise reduces stress through both chemical and behavioral mechanisms:

- **Neurochemical Benefits:** Exercise lowers the levels of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol while increasing the production of endorphins, which are the body's natural painkillers and mood enhancers. This boost in endorphins is responsible for the "runner's high" and the feelings of relaxation and optimism that often follow intense physical activity.
- **Behavioral Benefits:** As you get in shape, your self-image will improve along with your strength and stamina. This boosts your confidence and sense of control, which can spill over into other areas of your life. Exercise also provides a healthy distraction, offering a break from daily worries and giving you a chance to either enjoy solitude or connect with others.

Types of Exercise That Help Reduce Stress

Almost any type of exercise can help reduce stress, but some are particularly effective:

- **Rhythmic, Repetitive Movements:** Activities that involve large muscle groups in rhythmic motions, such as walking, jogging, or swimming, are particularly effective. This "muscular meditation" helps clear the mind and reduce stress.
- **Vigorous Workouts:** For those who prefer more intensity, activities like running or using ellipticals can burn off stress while improving fitness.
- **Stretching and Relaxation Exercises:** Post-workout stretching not only relaxes your muscles but also helps relax your mind. Simple stretching routines or yoga can be particularly beneficial.

Autoregulation Exercises for Stress Relief

In addition to regular physical activity, autoregulation exercises—techniques that help your mind and body relax—can be highly effective in managing stress. These exercises are particularly useful when mental stress manifests as physical symptoms, such as muscle tension, headaches, or a rapid heartbeat. By learning to relax your body, you can break the cycle of stress and tension.

Breathing Exercises: Simple deep breathing exercises can have a powerful impact on stress reduction:

1. Breathe in slowly and deeply, expanding your stomach.
2. Hold your breath briefly.
3. Exhale slowly, thinking the word "relax."
4. Repeat 5-10 times, focusing on deep, slow breaths.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: This technique involves tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups in your body, from your forehead down to your feet. It typically takes 12-15 minutes and can be practiced twice daily for the best results.

Meditation and Mental Stress Relief

In addition to physical exercises, mental exercises like meditation can also significantly reduce stress:

- **Meditation:** Regular meditation helps to calm the mind, lower heart rate, and reduce blood pressure. It involves focusing on a mantra or a fixed object to block out stressful thoughts. Although it can be challenging to master, the benefits of meditation are profound and long-lasting.

Exercise, Health, and Stress

Maintaining regular exercise is crucial not only for stress reduction but also for overall health. Regular physical activity lowers the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and even dementia. Aim for 30-40 minutes of moderate exercise, like walking, each day, or 15-20 minutes of more vigorous exercise. Incorporate strength training and stretching a few times a week to create a balanced program that promotes both physical and mental well-being.

By combining aerobic exercise, autoregulation techniques, and meditation, you can develop a comprehensive approach to managing stress and improving your overall health.

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