

How should we deliver our sessions?



This question is important because...

People are more likely to stay involved if they feel welcomed and believe that it's worthwhile coming along. They are more likely to come back if they have fun and feel that the session is manageable. The type of activity, its difficulty and intensity all have a part to play in how much people enjoy it and develop a sense of belonging. They must be given careful consideration. The people you involve in the delivery of your activities will also have a significant impact, particularly for people who have been inactive and may lack confidence.



Research

The University of Strathclyde's report tells us that projects which adopt a person-centred approach tend to have a greater impact on levels of inactivity than those which simply consider the usual barriers and motivations faced by different types of people.

The evidence suggests that 'small steps' approaches (ie setting a series of achievable goals) can be effective in nudging people towards more activity, but only if each step is followed by another step.

You can be most effective at helping inactive people become active, and continue to become more so, by actively involving individuals in developing their own journey. There are three key stages:

1. identifying their needs and also why they want to take part
2. appreciating the difference their increased activities levels is making for them, and



How should we deliver our sessions? (continued)



3. getting a sense of what the next stage might be in order to maintain or increase that person's levels of physical activity.

Key messages

- ✓ Work with people at an activity level that suits them individually, responding to what they say about the activities that interest and motivate them.
- ✓ Tailor one-to-one sessions to their unique situation and capabilities. Be ready to adapt as necessary.
- ✓ Make sure those involved in delivery are good at relating to other people.
- ✓ Consider non-traditional approaches to delivery and, if you can, involve the wider community.
- ✓ Stay positive at all times, even if someone's resolve has slipped or they've missed some sessions.
- ✓ Don't expect too much at once or set goals which are too ambitious. Using the 'small steps' approach allows lots of smaller successes which helps people stay motivated.
- ✓ Support people on a journey through which they become incrementally more active, step-by-step, while acquiring new skills and confidence.
- ✓ People who haven't been active for many years may come along expecting to fail. They may need lots of encouragement to stretch themselves and go beyond what they think they can achieve.
- ✓ In group activities be aware that there may be a wide range of levels of fitness. However, people may be unwilling to be moved on to a more advanced group if their main motivation is social or if they have formed a strong bond with the activity leader. Assess each individual's ability and make it easy for them to participate at their own level.