

## Lesson 3: Understanding Your Personal Motivation for Physical Activity

### Introduction

In this lesson students learn about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and apply that understanding to their own physical activity motivation. The suggested learning experiences reinforce students' understanding of the different types of motivation and provide them with opportunities to assess their own motivation related to physical activity and exercise.

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### Specific Learning Outcomes

**11.FM.2** Examine factors that have an impact on the development and implementation of and adherence to a personal physical activity plan.

*Examples:* motivation, barriers, changing lifestyle, values and attitudes, social benefits, finances, medical conditions, incentives, readiness for change

**11.FM.3** Examine and evaluate factors that affect fitness and activity choices.

*Examples:* intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, personal interests, personal health, family history, environment, finances, culture, level of risk

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### Key Understandings

- Motivation can be classified as intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.
  - Physical activity participation is affected by different motivational factors.
  - Awareness of personal motivation helps to strengthen, regulate, or change a person's behaviour.
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### Essential Question

1. What intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate you to exercise and to be active?
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## Background Information

### Understanding Motivation for Physical Activity

Self-regulation (or self-control) is an important concept for understanding why individuals are motivated to exercise or to be physically active. Factors that influence self-control can be organized into two categories: intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators. Intrinsic motivation represents our internal drive toward behaviour, while extrinsic motivation includes factors such as rewards or punishment. Understanding what best motivates individuals requires awareness of both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that regulate behaviour. Both intrinsic and extrinsic regulators of motivation are important to consider when attempting to achieve or maintain an active healthy lifestyle.

#### *Intrinsic Motivation*

Internal motivators produce a long-lasting commitment to exercise. Making exercise or physical activity more internally motivating might be a practical way of enhancing persistence to exercise. There are many intrinsic motivators to exercise, such as improved health, enhanced personal skill and ability, increased energy, and decreased stress.

People who successfully maintain a physical activity plan learn to shift their focus from long-term external outcomes, such as losing weight, to more positive internal experiences that occur in the short term, such as feeling good or performing better. Intrinsically motivated exercisers, by being physically active, have discovered things that hold true value for them. While some individuals may be exercising because they enjoy the actual movement, others may find that each exercise session holds a personal challenge for them. Whatever the reasoning behind the motivation to exercise, it must come from within a person for true meaning to be attached to it.

People who are intrinsically motivated do physical activity for its own sake and because they want to. They like the positive feelings of success and enjoyment that come from doing it well.

#### *Extrinsic Motivation*

Many people begin an exercise or physical activity plan because they are motivated by extrinsic factors, such as a desire to lose weight or to get in better shape. Unfortunately, body-related motives are not usually sufficient to sustain regular exercise programs, and, therefore, should not be made the most important reasons for engaging in exercise.

Examples of extrinsically motivated exercisers could be those who are inspired to begin an exercise program by the promise that it will help them lose weight. Those focusing on the goal of losing weight will likely be excited and motivated by the early results. They may experience significant weight loss early in the exercise program, largely due to water loss. With continued exercise, however, they will not continue to see the same degree of weight loss as their bodies become accustomed to the new activity. Individuals will often become unmotivated and drop out of an exercise program because they are no longer seeing the reward (weight loss) for their effort.

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**Refer to RM 3-FM: Mini-Biographies.**

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**Refer to RM 4-FM: Motivation for Physical Activity and Exercise/Working Out – Questionnaires (available in Word and Excel formats).**





### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies (Continued)

#### Hans

Hans is a civil engineer in his forties. He works out at a local gym a couple of times a week and is trying, fairly successfully, to go jogging regularly. He has two young children. Hans has a family history of heart disease and this has been weighing heavily on his mind in recent years. Although he was quite physically active in his youth, as an adult he did little exercise for many years until the children came along. He gave up smoking at around the same time. Hans says: “My father, uncle, and grandfather all died of heart disease in their early sixties. I can’t afford to let it happen to me, what with a wife and two young kids to worry about. So I exercise as much as I reasonably can. I can’t say I particularly enjoy it, and I usually have to push myself to go. But if I feel like skipping a session, I just think about the kids and what would happen if I had a heart attack. That makes me feel really bad if don’t go, like I’m guilty of letting them down.”

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### RM 3–FM: Mini-Biographies (Continued)

#### Lenin

Lenin is a construction worker. He loves physical activity of all sorts. He usually plays basketball or racquetball once a week, runs often (he takes part in his city’s annual 10 km fun run every year). “I’ve always been into sport and exercise,” he says. “It’s not as if I’m really all that good at it. I mean, I never had any illusions about playing professionally or anything like that. It’s just great to go out and kick a ball around or run in the park or whatever, have a laugh with your friends, and just forget about work and everything for a bit. I love it.” When asked if he thinks exercising is good for your health, he says: “Well, yeah, I suppose it must be. But that’s not what it’s all about for me, to be honest. I don’t worry too much about the future and all that, you know. I just like having a good time. I mean, if I started thinking like, ‘Oh, this’ll stop me from getting a heart attack,’ or whatever, I think it would end up being just like work. I’d hate to get all obsessed about it like some people. It wouldn’t be any fun then, would it?”

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## RM 4–FM: Motivation for Physical Activity and Exercise/ Working Out—Questionnaires\*



### Motivation for Physical Activity\*

People are active regularly for a variety of reasons. Using the rating scale provided below, please indicate how true each of the following reasons is for why you are, or would like to be, active regularly.

<b>Rating Scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	not at all true			somewhat true			very true

I try, or would like to try, to be physically active regularly	Rating
1. because I would feel bad about myself if I did not	
2. because others would be angry at me if I did not	
3. because I enjoy physical activities	
4. because I would feel like a failure if I did not	
5. because I feel as if it's the best way to help myself	
6. because people would think I'm a weak person if I did not	
7. because I feel as if I have no choice about being active; others make me do it	
8. because it is a challenge to accomplish my goal	
9. because I believe physical activity helps me feel better	
10. because it's fun	
11. because I worry that I would get into trouble with others if I did not	
12. because it feels important to me personally to accomplish this goal	
13. because I feel guilty if I am not regularly active	
14. because I want others to acknowledge that I am doing what I have been told I should do	
15. because it is interesting to see my own improvement	
16. because feeling healthier is an important value for me	

Example	
Extrinsically Motivated	Intrinsically Motivated
2	6
6	2
3	7
6	2
3	5
7	1
6	1
2	6
3	6
3	6
6	2
3	5
5	5
6	2
3	6
3	7

External Regulation: Questions 2, 7, 11, 14	
Introjected Regulation: Questions 1, 4, 6, 13	
Identified Regulation: Questions 5, 9, 12, 16	
Intrinsic Motivation: Questions 3, 8, 10, 15	
<b>Relative Autonomy Index</b>	

<b>6.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>2.8</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>-8.5</b>	<b>11.3</b>

**Autonomy index** indicates the relative impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors in your motivation to be active.

- Negative numbers reflect that you are extrinsically motivated for change; that is, external factors are important in regulating your behaviour.
- Positive numbers reflect that intrinsic motivation is primarily involved in your behaviour.

*Continued*

\* Source: Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. "Exercise Self-Regulation Questionnaires." *Self-Determination Theory: An Approach to Human Motivation and Personality—The Self-Regulation Questionnaires*. 2004. <[www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/selfreg\\_exer.html](http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/selfreg_exer.html)>. Adapted with permission.

## RM 4–FM: Motivation for Physical Activity and Exercise/ Working Out—Questionnaires\* (Continued)



### Motivation for Exercise/Working Out\*

People exercise/work out for a variety of reasons. Using the rating scale provided below, please indicate how true each of the following reasons is for why you work out or would like to work out.

<b>Rating Scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	not at all true			somewhat true			very true

I exercise/work out (or would like to work out)	Rating
1. because I simply enjoy working out	
2. because working out is important and beneficial for my health and lifestyle	
3. because I would feel bad about myself if I didn't do it	
4. because it is fun and interesting	
5. because others like me better when I am in shape	
6. because I'd be afraid of falling too far out of shape if I didn't	
7. because it helps my image	
8. because it is personally important to me to work out	
9. because I feel pressured to work out	
10. because I have a strong value for being active and healthy	
11. because I find pleasure in discovering and mastering new training techniques	
12. because I want others to see me as physically fit	

Example	
Extrinsically Motivated	Intrinsically Motivated
2	7
2	6
4	4
2	6
5	2
2	3
5	2
2	6
5	2
2	7
2	6
6	3

External Regulation: 5, 7, 12	
Introjected Regulation: 3, 6, 9	
Identified Regulation: 2, 8, 10	
Intrinsic Motivation: 1, 4, 11	
<b>Relative Autonomy Index</b>	

<b>5.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>-8.3</b>	<b>11.3</b>

**Autonomy index** indicates the relative impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors in your motivation to be active.

- Negative numbers reflect that you are extrinsically motivated for change; that is, external factors are important in regulating your behaviour.
- Positive numbers reflect that intrinsic motivation is primarily involved in your behaviour.

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