

Exercise is contagious because of social media

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A new study has shown that physical activity and exercise are 'contagious' because of social media. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) discovered that people who post details of their exercise patterns and achievements on

social media sites motivate and encourage other people to be more active. Researchers tracked the exercise routines of 1.1 million runners over a period of five years. They looked at the geographic location of the runners, their social network use, distance, time, pace and the calories they burned. The researchers concluded that sharing personal exercise data via social media can inspire others to exercise more, exercise harder and do so more competitively.

The journal 'Nature Communications' has published the research. The study includes detailed accounts of how inspiring it can be to read about a friend's physical activity. Researchers said: "On average, an additional kilometre run by friends can inspire someone to run an additional three-tenths of a kilometre, and an additional ten minutes run by friends can inspire someone to run three minutes longer." The study said social media improved the performance of runners who had been a little slower or less in shape, and of those who were showing signs of overtaking a friend's performance. Researcher Sinan Aral said: "In general, if you run more, it is likely that you can cause your friends to run more."

Sources: netdoctor.co.uk / health.com / nytimes.com

Writing

What are the good and bad things about social media? How does it change our life?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / social media / technology / motivate / runners / calories / exercise / data / journal / accounts / kilometer / improved / performance / in shape / signs / cause

True / False

- a) A new study says posting on social media is a good form of exercise. T / F
- b) The article says people join social networks to be inspired to exercise. T / F
- c) Researchers looked at the exercise patterns of over a million runners. T / F
- d) Researchers said posting one's exercise data encourages competition. T / F
- e) The study is yet to be published in a journal. T / F
- f) An extra kilometre you run can inspire a friend to run an extra 300m. T / F
- g) Posts about exercise on social media can help less in shape people. T / F
- h) The study says if you run more, you will post more on social media. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. contagious | a. put up |
| 2. discovered | b. usually |
| 3. post | c. encourage |
| 4. pace | d. found |
| 5. inspire | e. extra |
| 6. accounts | f. bettered |
| 7. additional | g. catching |
| 8. improved | h. fit |
| 9. in shape | i. reports |
| 10. in general | j. speed |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of exercise?
- c) Who is the most inspiring person among your friends?
- d) Does social media have any negative effects on your life?
- e) What kind of shape are you in?
- f) What do you do that might inspire others?
- g) What would motivate you to run more?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. physical activity and exercise | a. encourage other people |
| 2. people who post details of | b. in shape |
| 3. motivate and | c. tenths of a kilometre |
| 4. over a period | d. their exercise patterns |
| 5. social media can inspire | e. inspiring it can be |
| 6. detailed accounts of how | f. performance of runners |
| 7. run an additional three- | g. others to exercise more |
| 8. social media improved the | h. are 'contagious' |
| 9. a little slower or less | i. a friend's performance |
| 10. those who were showing signs of overtaking | j. of five years |

Discussion – Student B

- Do you think exercise can be contagious?
- What positive effect does social media have on you?
- Can running be addictive?
- Why do people post details of their exercise online?
- How much do you like exercise?
- What is your favourite form of exercise?
- Who inspires you?
- How do you motivate yourself?

Spelling

- aclypsih activity
- exercise patterns and acsimevhteen
- motivate and oecre nau g other people
- egrpioahgc location
- the srealcio they burned
- do so more lyteecyoptiim
- detailed tuascnno
- how pisninigr it can be
- On eraveag
- improved the rfparoeencm of runners
- grnveaitok a friend's
- In anlgere

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. i	7. e	8. f	9. h	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Hiking

You think hiking is the best form of exercise. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such good exercise. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): dancing, housework or shopping.

Role B – Dancing

You think dancing is the best form of exercise. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such good exercise. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): hiking, housework or shopping.

Role C – Housework

You think housework is the best form of exercise. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such good exercise. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): dancing, hiking or shopping.

Role D – Shopping

You think shopping is the best form of exercise. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such good exercise. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): dancing, housework or hiking.

Speaking – Exercise

Rank these with your partner. Put the best forms of exercise at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| • hiking | • playing with small kids |
| • gardening | • housework |
| • dancing | • washing the car |
| • sightseeing | • going shopping |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.