



Technology and Exercise - Friends or enemies?

Are the technology toys Santa left for you under the Christmas tree going to help you be physically active in 2016, or will they encourage you to stay on the couch?

Depending on what you are reading, or with who you are speaking, technology is either one of main reasons we are getting less active and is a contributing factor in our lack of community, or technology allows us to be active for longer, get feedback for motivation, and allows us access to information that used to be available only to those in research.

While we often think of technology as a new addition to our training, those exercising have been using basic technology such as heart rate monitors and pedometers for over 30 years. However it is in more recent years that technology has had more impact on our daily lives, in positive and negative ways.

The benefits of technology are most often seen when it encourages us to get moving rather than offering us an alternative to moving, such as wearable technology and app based tools.

The negative impacts of technology most often occur when we use it too much, leading to injuries such as neck and back problems due to hunched posture over a computer or phone, or when it leads to a lack of physical activity due to the length of time sitting in front of a screen.

While the act of sitting in front of a computer for long periods may lead to a lack of activity, what you read and the videos you watch can be positive if they encourage you to exercise, or give you advice on getting active. The trick is to turn inspiration into action.

Many of those who work as exercise professionals have embraced technology and offer advice and even exercise programmes online so you can get access to good advice, not just people sharing their own opinions or selling a product. By working with a REPs registered trainer or exercise professional who can give the right advice, and taking advantage of the latest technology, you get the best of both worlds; the right advice and the tools to use that advice.

Technology on the go is where we see the most positive developments. With basic heart rate monitors and pedometers being eclipsed by devices that can track not only your heart rate, and apps and software that can give you exercise guidance and connect you with the wider community, or your trainer.

There is also the benefit of being able to easily track effort and results over a period of time. After all the most effective exercise is one that you maintain over an extended period of time. It's important to use your technology to enhance your workout, rather than take it over. It's the effort you put in that determines your results.

The downside of technology is when it helps us be inactive, it's important that you are conscious of your 'screen time'. If lack of time is something that you use a reason for not being able to fit in exercise, keep a diary of how much time you spend on your devices - could this time be better used being active? While a full exercise session has more benefits than a short burst, you may be surprised to know that even short bouts of getting your heart rate up help.

While articles and advice on the internet can inspire and educate, there's nothing quite like a trainer who understands your specific needs and history working with you. To get the right advice make sure you are working with a REPs Registered Exercise professional who will have a wealth of knowledge and skill to help you get the best results.

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-text-neck-20150404-story.html>

References:

Richard Wiseman study: http://www.quirkology.com/UK/Experiment_resolution.shtml

Contact Details:

For interviews and further information, please contact Richard Beddie Chief Executive, Exercise New Zealand richard@exercisenz.org.nz, telephone 0800 66 88 11, or Stephen Gacsal REPs Registrar, at stephen@reps.org.nz telephone 0800 55 44 99 - www.reps.org.nz

Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

