

# Assessing the Factors that Motivate Keep Fit Club Members in the Cape Coast Metropolis to Engage in Physical Fitness Related Activities

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct descriptive survey to investigate factors that motivate keep fit club members in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana to engage in physical fitness related activities. Data was collected from a sample size of 100 respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was revealed that most members in the Clubs keep fit mainly because of health reasons. It was recommended that keep fit clubs should find ways of helping their members to measure their improvement while keeping fit. They should learn more activities in other to vary their exercises.

**Keywords:** Keep fit, Exercises, Aerobic activities, Healthy living

## Introduction

People who exercise regularly often choose activities that fit their lifestyles and individual preferences. These activities have the potential for helping them achieve a state of physical fitness. Physical fitness is achieved when the organic systems of the body are healthy and function efficiently so as to resist diseases to enable the fit person to engage in vigorous tasks and leisure activities, and to handle situations of emergencies.

The variety of approaches to the fitness unit reflects the differing views people have about fitness. In this regard, it may be useful to outline briefly the accepted understandings of the different forms of fitness. Thirty years ago, physical fitness was push-ups, straight-log sit-ups, pull-ups, sprinting a short distance and running a long distance, perhaps it should have been called military fitness, from which the tests originated.

Today, when discussing fitness, we need to distinguish its various forms, which include health fitness or health-related fitness, physical fitness or athletic fitness, and motor fitness or health fitness. It needs to be understood these three categories of fitness if there is the need to plan programs to achieve the fitness goals specified.

Most young children are naturally physically active; they are inclined, however, to become sedentary as society and the environment make it increasingly difficult for them to remain active during late childhood and adolescence. As a result of investigations detailing the possible pediatric nature of coronary heart disease, an enthusiastic emphasis has been given to the study of fitness in school-age children. This emphasis has, in part promulgated the health fitness concern evident in physical education. Fitness problems in youth are often manifested in adults as degenerative diseases and chronic ailments. These problems are displayed in poor cardiovascular endurance, high levels of body fat, abdominal bulge, poor lower-back strength, and deficient lower-back flexibility (Payne and Halm, 2002).

Fitness programs that demonstrate important outcomes are difficult to develop and maintain. First, physical education is not considered to be a vehicle purely for the development of fitness. Many other outcomes are important, and these too take time and program resources to achieve. The second major constraint on achieving fitness goals is time. Improvement in cardiovascular fitness requires a minimum of 20 minutes of sustained aerobic exercise at 70 percent of maximum capacity at least three days per week. Strength and flexibility goals add to that time demand. Gaining adequate time for fitness and then using that time efficiently remains the most important ingredient in development and maintenance of good fitness program.

Following a program of regular aerobic exercise improves the efficiency of your cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Most specifically, regular aerobic exercise strengthens the muscles of the heart, enabling the heart to pump more blood with fewer strokes to meet the demand placed on it. As a result, the resting heart rate may become slower than in the past, indicating that you have become physically fit. All the same time, the respiratory system becomes stronger and more efficient in delivering oxygen to the tissues of the body. This Cardio respiratory fitness enables the body to deal with the routine and extraordinary demands of the daily life more easily. Cardio respiratory fitness is the foundation for whole-body fitness. This fitness increases the

capacity to sustain a given level of energy for a prolonged period. Thus the body can work longer and at greater levels of intensity. Cardio respiratory fitness has important benefits for everyone, including children, pregnant women and older adults. In addition, improving your Cardio respiratory (aerobic) fitness has a variety of benefits that can improve nearly all parts of life.

Nowadays, most Ghanaians have been educated enough to embrace the idea of keeping fit. Some do different types of activities to keep them going at times daily, every other day or weekly. Some do individual programs, others with their peers or families, some also have formed clubs and they do different types of activities with the view to keeping fit. Cape Coast, a regional capital of Central Region is noted to be the educational hub of the nation, with trading and white collar job and minor fishing oriented community. It links people from the south-eastern and western parts and the middle belt of Ghana. Aside, there are keep fit clubs and other clubs which do keep fit alongside their main activities and those groups which were formed purposely to keep fit. Some of these have technical instructors, others have not but they do what they deem to be good enough for them. Whether right programs are followed, at correct periods at appropriate places and at regular times need to be investigated.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Fitness itself means many things to people in community. Some see it as a part of athletics and something that only gifted athletes should strive for. Others view fitness with fear and anxiety. For still others, it represents hard work to be avoided at all cost. However, given a health fitness orientation, it is possible that adolescents will come to understand the meaning and relevance of fitness to their lives.

So what needs to be done? Several strategies are available to rectify the situation. The most fruitful approach would be to institute a special fitness class that meets at least three times a week, with a minimum of 20 minutes of activity that is monitored in terms of intensity, frequency and duration. According to Gleeson (2007), physical exercise helps in developing and maintaining physical fitness. It also improves alertness and overall health. It gives strength to the muscle, and helps in maintaining a healthy weight. Frequent and regular physical exercise boosts up the immune system and helps to prevent various diseases, such as, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, bone diseases etc. Moreover, exercising prevents depression and improves mental health by relieving stress and anxiety. Exercise keeps the individual flexible and agile; it also increases strength and stamina. Sound sleep can be enjoyed by exercising regularly.

According to Williamson (1991), keep fit is a series or system of exercises intended to improve the circulation and respiratory system, suppleness and stamina, it is an exercise to promote physical fitness if performed regularly.

Recently, there are several groups springing up in all corners which are mostly seen on weekends on roads using different modes to exercise. The researcher upon carefully observing the activities and practices of keep fit clubs in the Metropolis and interacting with some members realized the need to investigate how and why the members keep fit.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the factors that motivate Keep fit Club members to engage in physical fitness related activities in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Research Question**

What factors motivate members of keep fit Clubs to participate in related physical fitness activities?

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was employed. The target population of 500 was drawn from the members of the five registered keep fit clubs in Cape Coast Metropolis. (Regional Sports Authority, 2016). Convenience sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents, 60 males and 40 females with at least ten of them selected from each of the registered clubs, 6 males and 4 females. The instrument developed for the study was a questionnaire. Respondents were requested to respond to each item on a four-point Likert scale.

### **Results/Discussions**

#### **Research Question: What factors do motivate Participants to engage in Physical Fitness Related Activities?**

The table concerns itself with the factors (benefits) participants (members) of keep fit clubs derive from keeping fit. The result is presented on Table 1.

**Table 1: Benefits Participants of Keep Fit Derive from Keeping Fit**

Benefits	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Improves muscle tone	48 (48)	52 (52)	100 (100)
Maintains recommended body weight	95 (95)	05 (05)	100 (100)
Improves the immune system	100 (100)	0 (0)	100 (100)
Improves posture and body appearance	64 (64)	36 (36)	100 (100)
Improves recovery rate	64 (64)	36 (36)	100 (100)
Prevent chronic diseases	100 (100)	0 (0)	100 (100)
To socialize	100 (100)	0 (0)	100 (100)
Manage stress	46 (46)	54 (54)	100 (100)
Improve blood circulation	76 (76)	24 (24)	100 (100)
Improves organs functioning	85 (85)	15 (15)	100 (100)
Reduces injuries	14 (14)	86 (86)	100 (100)

The result showed clearly that all the respondents have improved their immune system, prevent chronic disease, to socialize and possibly to control body weight. More than half of them also have benefited by experiencing organs functioning others have had very improved blood circulation and better recovery rate. But few others are yet to notice improvement in their muscle tone, management of stress and prevention of injuries.

Considering the results of this question, Stampfer, Hu, Manson, Rimm and Willett (2000) said the following to confirm them. They say:

**To Look Good:** I am sure each one of you will agree with me on this. All of us want to look good. We all want to be in shape. Regular exercise is the key to a healthy look and an attractive body. Internal health is the key to a pleasant external appearance.

**To Reduce the Risk of Heart Diseases:** Daily exercise helps in strengthening of heart muscles. It helps maintain desired cholesterol levels. Daily physical activity reduces one's chances of stroke and the risk of heart disease.

**To Lower Blood Pressure:** Daily exercise lowers blood pressure and improves blood circulation. Exercise helps in reduction of excess body weight and thus helps lower the blood pressure. Exercise results in the burning of calories. If supplemented with proper nutrition, exercise is sure to prevent obesity.

**To Reduce the Risk of Diabetes:** Daily exercise helps reduce the fat percentage of the body, thus reducing the risk of diabetes.

**To Reduce the Risk of Osteoporosis:** Regular exercise promotes bone growth. It strengthens the bones and tissues of the body and helps in increasing the bone density. Thus, exercise serves as an effective means to reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

**To Increase Longevity:** Daily physical activity is the key to a long life! Regular exercise helps in the prevention of obesity, which is one of the important factors responsible for many severe diseases. Exercise helps in reducing the risk of diabetes, blood pressure and heart diseases. Research has shown that people engaging in a daily physical activity live longer than those who do not exercise at all.

**To Improve Balance and Reduce the Risk of Injuries:** Exercise is found to improve the balance and coordination of the body. As regular exercise strengthens the muscles and connective tissues of the body, the risk of severe injuries is reduced to a great extent.

**To Remain Productive:** Regular exercise reverses the natural decline in the metabolism that sets in after the age of thirty. Those who exercise regularly are found to remain more productive and energetic during the day. Increased energy levels help remain active during the day. A 30 minute-exercise every morning can help a person feel fresh throughout the day.

**To Increase Overall Strength:** Exercise is found to increase overall strength of the body. Rigorous exercise brings about an increase in stamina of the body. It also increases body's endurance, thus resulting in an increase in a person's physical capacity.

**To be Happy:** Higher energy levels resulting from exercise help a person in remaining fresh and happy. Following a suitable exercise program can add some fun and brightness to the day. Being active greatly causes a reduction in stress levels. Exercise is believed to generate 'happiness molecules' in a person's body, thus helping him/her stay happy. They continue to say that:

**Exercise controls weight:** Exercise can help prevent excess weight gain or help maintain weight loss. When you engage in physical activity, you burn calories. The more intense the activity, the more calories you burn. You don't need to set aside large chunks of time for exercise to reap weight-loss benefits. If you can't do an actual workout, get more active throughout the day in simple ways — by taking the stairs instead of the elevator or revving up your household chores.

**Exercise combats health conditions and diseases:** No matter what your current weight, being active boosts high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or "good," cholesterol and decreases unhealthy triglycerides. This one-two punch keeps your blood flowing smoothly, which decreases your risk of cardiovascular diseases. In fact, regular

physical activity can help you prevent or manage a wide range of health problems and concerns, including stroke, heart diseases, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, and certain types of cancer, arthritis and falls.

**Exercise improves mood:** A workout at the gym or a brisk 30-minute walk can help with an emotional lift or blow off some steam after a stressful day. Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier and more relaxed. You may also feel better about your appearance and yourself when you exercise regularly, which can boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem.

**Exercise boosts energy:** Regular physical activity can improve your muscle strength and boost your endurance. Exercise and physical activity deliver oxygen and nutrients to your tissues and help your cardiovascular system work more efficiently. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to go about your daily chores.

According to Borer, Wuorineen, Lukos, Denver, Porges and Burant (2009), regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help control your weight, reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, reduce your risk of some cancers, strengthen your bones and muscle, improve your mental health and mood, improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you're an older adult and increase your chances of living longer.

**Control your weight:** Both diet and physical activities play a critical role in controlling your weight. You gain weight when the calories you burn, including those burned during physical activity, are less than the calories you eat or drink. When it comes to weight management, people vary greatly in how much physical activity they need. You may need to be more active than others to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

**To lose weight and keep it off:** You will need a high amount of physical activity unless you also adjust your diet and reduce the amount of calories you are eating and drinking. Getting to and staying at a healthy weight requires both regular physical activity and a healthy eating plan.

**Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease:** Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the United States. But following the guidelines and getting at least 150 minutes a week (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity can put you at a lower risk for these diseases. You can reduce your risk even further with more physical activity. Regular physical activity can also lower your blood pressure and improve your cholesterol levels.

**Reduce your risk to Type 2 Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome:** Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a condition in which you have some combination of too much fat around the waist, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides, or high blood sugar. Research shows that lower rates of these conditions are seen with 120 to 150 minutes (2 hours to 2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of a least moderate-intensity aerobic activity. And the more physical activity you do, the lower your risk will be.

**Reduce the risk of some cancers:** Being physically active lowers your risk for two types of cancer: colon and breast. Research shows that physically active people have a lower risk of colon cancer than do people who are not active and physically active women have a lower risk of breast cancer than do people who are not active.

**Reduce your risk of endometrial and lung cancer:** Although the research is not yet final, some findings suggest that your risk of endometrial cancer and lung cancer may be lower if you get regular physical activity compared to people who are not active.

**Strengthen your bones and muscles:** As you age, it is important to protect your bones, joints and muscles. Not only do they support your body and help you move, but keeping bones, joints and muscles healthy can help ensure that you are able to do your daily activities and be physically active. Research shows that doing aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening physical activity of at least a moderately-intense level can slow the loss of bone density that come with age. Hip fracture is a serious health condition that can have life-changing negative effects, especially if you are an older adult. But research shows that people who do 120 to 130 minutes of at least moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week have a lower risk of hip fracture. Regular physical activity helps with arthritis and other conditions affecting the joints. If you have arthritis, research shows that doing 130 to 150 (2 hours and 10 minutes to 2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, low-impact aerobic activity can not only improves your ability to manage pain and do everyday tasks, but in can also make your quality of life better. Build strong, healthy muscles: muscle-strengthening activities can help you increase or maintain your muscle mass and strength. Slowly increasing the amount of weight and number of repetitions you do will give you even more benefits, no matter your age.

**Improve your mental health and mood:** Regular physical activity can help keep you thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp as you age. It can also reduce your risk of depression and may help you sleep better. Research has shown that doing aerobic or a mix of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities 3 to 5 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes can give you these mental health benefits. Some scientific evidence has also shown that even lower levels of physical activity can be beneficial.

**Improves Bone Health:** Adults participating in very high-intensity weight-bearing endurance and resistance

exercises increase their bone density. If you stop exercising at high intensities, you will not maintain your gains in bone mass. The American College of Sports Medicine reports that after age 40, you lose 0.5 percent or more of your bone mass every year. Performing less-than-vigorous exercises may not increase your bone density, but it will reduce your rate of bone loss. This reduces your risk of fractures if you fall. According to a 2009 article by Angela Fern, published by the American College of Sports Medicine, falls are the leading cause of disability and injury deaths in the United States for seniors 65 years and older. High-intensity endurance exercises include sprinting, interval training and plyometrics. High-intensity resistance exercises include using moderate to heavy weights when you do squats, lunges and shoulder presses.

According to O'Connor, Crowe, and Spinks (2005), the following are some of the benefits why we should try to keep fit always. Doing exercise and being fit is a simple form of stress relief, it helps your whole body to function better, and it makes you look and feel good. When you exercise you will feel good straight away because it works on the part of the brain that determines what kind of mood you're in. Being fit will help you cope with stress from school and work, it will help you to work at school or work by increasing your concentration levels which will help you to remember more information. It can help in increasing your test scores no matter what you are doing it on. If you are overweight, it will help you lose weight and make you look great. You will not be as tired and you will be more alert. If you play sport you will be able to play it better and longer. Your risk of cardiovascular disease will go down. You will not get as moody. It helps maintain your muscles, bones and joints. Prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure and helps reduce blood pressure in some adolescents with hypertension. You will make new friends and get better sleep. Your energy levels will increase and reduces feelings of depression and anxiety. It will reduce the risk of getting type 2 diabetes, some cancers and you will live longer and you will reduce the risk of getting osteoporosis and other diseases that weaken bones and muscles.

Wilmore and Knuttgen (2003) added that keeping fit is about how we as individuals choose to live our lives and the levels of fitness we aspire to. We all need a certain amount of the right type of exercise to keep us healthy, regardless of our lifestyle, age or physical ability.

Remaining physically fit is important for the following reasons:

1. Maintaining a good level of physical fitness will give you a feeling of better health through increased energy and vitality, making you feel better about yourself and about your life.
2. Being fit helps the activities in your life easier to manage; it keeps your body in shape and keeps you looking good, which in turn provides 'the feel good factor' making you work more efficiently and effectively.
3. Keeping fit can help improve your quality of life and help maintain a good standard of health, preventing or delaying heart related diseases.
4. Other benefits of keeping physically fit through exercise:
5. Exercise helps reduce stress & improves personal performance.
6. Exercise helps you control your weight and body shape.
7. Team sports such as football or rugby can improve your social life

According to Van Praag, Kempermann and Gage (1999), exercises help us in the following ways:

Exercise reduces levels of cortisol, which causes many health problems, both physical and mental: Frequent and regular aerobic exercise has been shown to help prevent or treat serious and life-threatening chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, insomnia, and depression. Endurance exercise before meals lowers blood glucose more than the same exercise after meals. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exercise\\_-\\_cite\\_note-15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exercise_-_cite_note-15)) According to the World Health Organization, lack of physical activity contributes to approximately 17% of heart disease and diabetes, 12% of falls in the elderly, and 10% of breast cancer and colon cancer. There is some evidence that vigorous exercise (90–95% of VO<sub>2</sub> Max) is more beneficial than moderate exercise (40 to 70% of VO<sub>2</sub> Max). Some studies have shown that vigorous exercise executed by healthy individuals can increase opioid peptides (a.k.a. endorphins, naturally occurring opioids that in conjunction with other neurotransmitters are responsible for exercise-induced euphoria and have been shown to be addictive), increase testosterone and growth hormone, effects that are not as fully realized with moderate exercise. More recent research indicates that anandamide may play a greater role than endorphins in "runner's high". However, training at this intensity for long periods of time, or without proper warm-up beforehand and cool down afterwards, can lead to an increased risk of injury and overtraining.

According to Thase (2007), working out in fitness boosts one's desire to exercise, as it is a professional place with people of all shapes and sizes exercising. It will also help you see results quicker than when working out on your own. Fitness clubs have flexible schedules, which allow one to use it when desired. Some even have a 24-hour policy, which works best for those with hectic lifestyles or are shy to work out in front of others but still want to use a gym.

He continued to say aerobic fitness also offers a variety of other benefits that, although not immediately obvious, are no less important. For example, the increased stamina that comes with Cardio respiratory fitness

enables the completion and better enjoy your daily activities. In addition, your improved fitness level may reduce the severity and shorten the duration of common illnesses. Likewise, finding the ability to cope with stressors to be increased with your fitness level, as a result, the sense of well-being and confidence will be improved. Older adults will find that improving the Cardio respiratory fitness enables them to enjoy their later years to a greater extent, giving them the energy and ability to participate in activities that they might have delayed for many years, such as traveling or even activities they might never have considered such as joining a square dance club or learning how to line dance. When one becomes aerobically fit, one may be able to achieve a long-held goal, such as hiking part of the Apalachian Trail, climbing Mt. Rainier or bicycling through Europe. Others might find expansion in the circle of friends.

### Conclusions

It was realized that, most people know the importance of health-related component when keeping fit. Even though most people did not rate their improvement excellent or very good as a result of not joining the club early or may not know how to identify changes in health. All of them seemed to cherish body composition. The rating to their improvement produced insignificant differences. About the benefits, improvement in muscle tone was not popular because most of the members don't include that in their reasons for keeping fit. Only few members are aware that keeping fit reduces stress. No wonder every member had in mind that, they socialize, and prevent diseases as a result of improvement in immune system.

Finally, most people are not aware that, when you cater for body composition and do some stretching activities to improve flexibility, your chance of reducing your risk of injury is highly reduced looking at their response on health related component needed and benefit derive from keeping fit. Reduction of smoking and alcohol was low and this may be that, only few respondents' smoke or drink alcohol.

### Recommendations

The study revealed that keep fit must travel beyond 30 minutes before it can be effective so education must be done on the duration, while highlight on regularity be given so that it within 30 minutes but regular exercise is done, it will yield a fruitful result. People are not aware of other health related components apart from cardiovascular and body composition so organizers of keep fit clubs must educate and emphasize activities that will build other components.

Organizers of keep fit should find ways of helping their members to measure their improvement while keeping fit. Also, organizers should try and learn other exercises so as to vary their exercises in order not to bore their members who may think that almost all the exercises are known by them and that may affect their turn-up.

The issue of diet control must also be emphasized as well as resting. Education on whatever necessary for one to be physically fit should be very paramount for all members irrespective of your academic level most especially on the benefits of joining the club in terms of health rather than social benefits.

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