



Best Practices: Computerized programs combined with Health Promotion

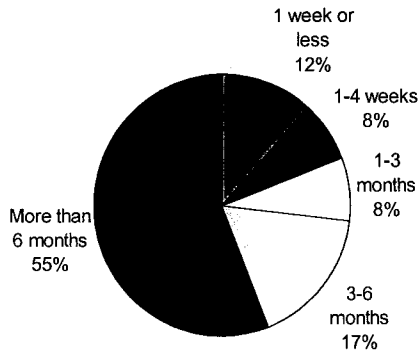
In the fall of 2007 a short-term historical study was conducted to measure participant's use of the CoreCommunity program when combined with health promotion. The KickStart program in Kelowna, B.C., was used to track how long participants used the CoreCommunity program from the fall of 2006 to spring of 2007. While the study needs more time to confirm longer term results and HEPA research does support it, early indications suggest a large majority of people who join a community program will remain on board and active for up to 6 months or more.

Three individual groups of participants, who registered in different two-week windows, were tracked for six months or more to study the how long they remained engaged and active with the program. Activity was measured by dates in which data was entered. The participant study intakes were Sept 1-15, 2006, Jan 1-15, 2007 and May 1-15, 2007.

The combined findings showed on average 54% of the participants remained active for more than 6 months and may have continued to be actively using the program. Overall 72 % remained with the program for at least 3 months. The study showed 12% of the participants dropped out in the first week and an additional 8% dropped off within the first month.

Items that help participants to remain in the program could be attributed to the following:

How Long People are Active



- Walking is the easiest way to help people to be active
- The program was a participant paid user fee design
- Prizes were given to participants by random draw for people remaining in the program and reporting data
- Seasonal large grand prize of free vacation airline tickets and several smaller top ten prizes acted as a strong motivator
- Participants were emailed to encourage continued use and provide information on local walks
- Strong local advertising on TV, newspapers and recreation centers occurred promoting system usage of the "Steps Out technology-based pedometer program"
- The interactive nature of the website creating a fun motivation to "Be Active and Stay Active"
- The milestone pop up reminders encouraged people
- Buddy communication through ecards helped motivate people
- Challenges help to motivate people

The goal of the program is to motivate inactive and active people engage in activity long enough to see reasonable change in lifestyle habits and increase activity to reach an equivalent to 10,000 steps a day. Research in the stages of motivation for exercise suggests that if people reach the stages of action and maintenance for a prolonged period of time it can result in lifestyle changes. The most promising results came from computer-based individualized and interactive interventions¹

Conclusion

There is a lack of complete research on computerized walking programs to fully compare results to other studies at this time. However initial results indicate that the program will keep the majority of participants engaged long enough to reach the 10,000 steps levels and to initiate a change of behaviour or attitude towards activity levels. A limitation of the study is that researchers were unable to clearly identify participant's levels of activity prior to the study and more study is needed in this area.

1. American Journal of Health Promotion. 1997 Sep-Oct;12(1):38-48 Prochaska, Velicer