

WELCOMING WEEKEND WARRIORS

by Karlie Intlekofer, Ph.D.

Fitness professionals know that physical activity guidelines encourage at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. The challenge for more than half of active adults, however, is that they can only make it into your fitness facility one or two days a week. But that's no reason for these "weekend warrior" members to give up. You can encourage them to stick with fitness by letting them know that limited workout patterns deliver most of the same advantages as exercise throughout the week.

The Advantages of Frequent Workouts

First, let's examine the common knowledge that we should workout more than just once or twice a week. It's true that short, low-intensity, frequent workouts can help individuals ease into exercise as they build their endurance and fitness. Frequent workouts are also closely linked with achieving exercise goals, and this can provide the motivation they need to keep coming back to your facility. Related to this, research demonstrates that higher health club attendance rates increase the odds of membership renewal. Yet despite the benefits of frequent facility visits, it is a reality that many people can only exercise one to two times a week due to busy work and home lives.

Benefits for Weekend Warriors

Luckily, even working out as little as one or two times a week can still make a big impact on health compared to those who are inactive. While an infrequent exercise pattern may be slightly less effective than frequent workouts for reversing high blood lipids or blood sugar, weekend warriors can still see significant benefits.

A recent study examining the activity patterns of almost 90,000 individuals confirms impressive heart health benefits for weekend warriors. Along with frequent exercisers, weekend warriors show a significantly lower risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure and heart rhythm issues compared to those who were inactive.





Studies also suggest that both weekend warriors and those who were regularly active have less fat around the waistline than inactive individuals. And when it comes to blood vessel health, both weekend warriors and regularly active individuals enjoy similar benefits provided that both groups reach similar exercise intensities. This indicates that for active people, higher intensities may matter more than workout frequency for heart health.

Infrequent Exercise is Better than No Exercise

You can support weekend warriors at your fitness facility by encouraging them to stick with it, even if they can only dedicate a limited amount of time to exercise. Let them know that working out even one day a week can offer considerable health benefits. Remind all the people you work with that while frequent exercise is recommended, intensity of exercise is perhaps even more important for heart health. With your support, even busy weekend warriors will come to see every visit to your fitness facility as a worthwhile step toward a healthier future.





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Karlie Intlekofer, Ph.D.
GLOBAL WELLNESS RESEARCHER

Dr. Karlie Intlekofer is a neuroscientist who focuses on the benefits of exercise for brain health and well-being. She has a background in research and teaching at the university level and focuses on exercise motivation and brain areas involved in stress, learning and memory. Her passion in this field is bolstered by experience working with a wide range of ages and abilities as a personal trainer and group exercise instructor. As the Global Wellness Researcher at Matrix Fitness, Karlie integrates evidence-based practices into exercise programming and develops initiatives that support an enduring habit of physical activity.