



## Motivating Men to Move More!

According to Ministry of Health data, NZ men live on average four years less than women, with Maori and Pacific men having even shorter expected life spans. This is despite men having comparable self-reported ratings of good to excellent health. Obesity is a significant problem. Thirty percent of NZ men are obese and a further 39 percent are overweight.

According to researcher Dr Fiona Doolan-Noble, "**New Zealand men are getting fatter, faster than men elsewhere**". Chronic health conditions including heart disease, lung cancer and diabetes are major causes of death. Reasons for this are multifactorial, but include unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and smoking.



The good news is that despite common stereotypes to the contrary, research has shown that **men are concerned about their weight and health** (Maddison et al. 2019).

Engagement is the challenging part. What are the reasons for lack of participation, and

what can activity providers and exercise professionals do to make their classes, groups and programmes more "men-friendly"? Read on...

## Engaging Men: What are the barriers?

Some of the reasons men give for not participating in commercial or health service-based weight management, and healthy lifestyle programmes include:

- Concerns about feeling out of place in female dominated groups
- Perceptions that activities and services are 'for women'
- Not wanting to ask for help
- Not knowing what activities and programmes are available
- Perceptions of embodied masculinities that make men value bigger, muscular bodies

In regards to **group exercise classes and activities**, related themes emerge:

- Men like the social aspects of a mixed class, but most will shun a class that risks making them appear un-masculine.
- Many men feel reluctant to attend a class, because they don't want to look or feel silly in a room full of women or in front of a female instructor.
- Promotional imagery (such as lycra) and class names like "Tone and Stretch" and "Cardio Funk" are a significant deterrent.
- Many men lack the 'know how' required to exercise effectively.
- Exercise is a low priority due to other priorities (including lack of time to spend being active).



## Key considerations for Older Men

According to Alexandra Williams, MA. in her article *What Older Adults Want*, most older participants will probably attend a group exercise class because they **want to feel better and enhance their quality of life**. "With older adults, it's all about *functional* fitness, not

fashionable fitness,” says Peggy Buchanan MA – director of the fitness and aquatics centre at Vista del Monte retirement community.

As you’re teaching movement to older adults, try to relate your cuing to daily tasks. For example instead of saying, “Reach and stretch,” say, “Reach as though you’re trying to get something off the top shelf.” Ken Alan is a Los Angeles-based instructor who has been teaching older adults since 1985, and calls this “**movement with meaning.**”

Alan says the factors motivating seniors fall into one of four categories:

1. **Prevention:** They want to prevent something from happening, such as cardiac disease or physical deterioration.
2. **Control:** They want to gain control of their lives, bodies and health.
3. **Reversal:** They want to reverse something that’s already happened, such as weight gain or a decrease in range of motion.
4. **Participation:** They want to participate in life in a meaningful way.

[Check out the full article to find out how to leverage off these senior motivations.](#) It provides lots of practical tips about programme design, music, motivation and communication, health histories and choosing the right class name.



## What do Maori Men think about exercise?

Dr Isaac Warbrick is an exercise physiologist at the AUT School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies and director of the Taupua Waiora Centre for Māori Health Research at AUT South Campus. He conducted a qualitative study of sedentary Māori men aged 30 to 70 years with a body mass index over 25. Participants shared their preferences and thoughts on physical activity.

Four key themes emerged from the data: ‘**camaraderie and bro-ship**’, ‘**adulthood distractions and priorities**’, ‘**provider orientation**’ and ‘**problems with contemporary gym culture**’. These insights are very helpful to activity providers and health practitioners, as they highlight the importance of cultural relevance and pinpoint key considerations that should be taken into account when designing activities for Maori men.

[Check out the full article published on the NZ Doctor website for more information.](#)





## Practical Tips to Increase Participation

Teaching style, personalities, movement choices, music, session length and class names all play a role in how men perceive group exercise. Here are some ideas you might like to try:

1. Limit the choreography and keep it simple. Men aren't used to remembering step after step.
2. Add more "masculine" choices to group classes. Body weight exercises, like push-ups, jump squats and one-legged dead lifts are good options. Movements that are associated with sport like batting, catching, bowling and the use of balls can also add interest and variety.
3. Consider offering a group class specifically for men or a separate class to learn the basics before joining a regular class.
4. In order to draw men into your classes, you may need to slightly modify your presentation style. Make sure classes are energetic and exciting, with a sense of humour.
5. Include male imagery and role models in your promotional material.
6. To overcome time constraints, consider offering a High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) class so that participants can get physically active in far less time. For Maori, blend in group-based and culturally relevant approaches.
7. For older men, incorporate exercises that mimic or assist with the activities of daily living; for example, squats help people get in and out of chairs.

These tips come from the following articles:

- [Oh, Man!](#);
- [What Māori men really think about exercise](#); and
- [What Older Adults Want](#).

## Focus on Men

There are lots of free events happening this November at Tūranga and everyone is welcome to join in!

To find out more, visit [christchurchcitylibraries.com](http://christchurchcitylibraries.com)

Tūranga  
60 Cathedral Square



Tūranga – the central Christchurch library – is **all about men in November** with a series of events that coincide with “Movember”. The calendar includes a number of free health and fitness sessions being provided by Sport Canterbury, the YMCA Christchurch and Exercise As Medicine NZ.

On offer is a Stretch, Core, Breathe Class, Prost-FIT session, Circuit Class, Live Stronger for Longer presentation and a Smoothie Bike and Activities session. More details available on:

- [the Christchurch City Libraries website](http://christchurchcitylibraries.com); or
- [the Active Canterbury Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/activecanterbury).

## [Education, Training and Development](#)

### [Spring Activity Providers Workshop](#)

**Date and Time:** Saturday 9th November, from 12.30 to 4.30pm.

**Location:** Pioneer Recreation Centre

Motivating Men into Exercise is the focus of this FREE workshop. The emphasis will be on practical tips that you can incorporate into an existing or new activity, to encourage more men into group exercise. The workshop will also cover simple group warm ups, an overview of Qi Gong and information about osteoarthritis.

The workshop is suitable for community group exercise leaders and volunteers, exercise professionals delivering group exercise classes, and students completing exercise qualifications. You will earn 2.5 CPDs if you attend the entire workshop.

[Register online to attend this workshop](#). Places are filling up fast so be quick!

**Registrations close on Wednesday 6th November at 5pm.**

Contact Workshop and Training Coordinator Kris Tynan for more information (on 021 262 8886 or [kris.tynan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kris.tynan@xtra.co.nz)).

### [Online Courses from Exercise as Medicine NZ](#)

Exercise as Medicine NZ (EAM) has launched two new online courses designed for exercise professionals wanting to upskill around long-term conditions and exercise:

**Joints and Bones** and **Parkinson's Pro**. These courses are part of a broader suite of foundation courses currently being developed by EAM directors Kris Tynan and Tim Webster. Level 1 courses take 3 to 5 hours to complete and 5 to 8 hours for Level 2 courses.

These courses are supported by Arthritis NZ, Osteoporosis NZ, the NZ Exercise Association, REPs, Prostate Cancer Foundation, Parkinson's NZ and Physio NZ.



### **Small Funding Grants for Pacific Initiatives**

A new initiative from Pegasus Health (Charitable) Ltd aims to provide Pacific organisations in Canterbury with start-up funds to help implement new activities that encourage active lifestyles and regular exercise.

Churches, trusts and organisations that work with Pacific communities can apply for up to \$1000 to help cover delivery costs. Applications are open now and interested groups have **until Friday 15th November 2019** to apply.

[Find out more about the Small Grants Funding for Pacific Initiatives.](#)



The **New Zealand Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)** recently put out a press release to raise awareness about the importance of exercise for men's health. It includes recommendations on how men can get started into physical activity and focus on health and wellness.

Their advice is: **being active doesn't have to be complicated or overly strenuous**. There are plenty of benefits both long and short term, from a moderate approach with small, sustainable changes.

[Read the REPs press release on the importance of exercise for men.](#)



### **Walking speed may be a powerful predictor of lifespan and health**

New research has found that people who tend to walk more slowly at the age of 45, present with signs of premature accelerated aging, both physically and cognitively.

The international research team said the findings were an "**amazing surprise**". As well as signs of "accelerated ageing" the more unexpected finding was that brain scans showed the slower walkers were more likely to have older-looking brains too.

[Read more about this research on walking speed and ageing.](#)



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We welcome your feedback and comments.