



Working for Health

Young at Heart

Presenter

The Young at Heart Group in Grenoside. This is a group which has been established to help local older people in a particular area of Sheffield keep active after retirement age. First Dr Rachel Davey, a sports scientist, explains how the group was set up.

Rachel Davey

Well the project that you saw at Grenoside is part of a longer term study that was carried out and it was started about four years ago and it was funded by the National Health Service. The primary aim was to look at the effects of community physical exercise on health care costs and on people's own perception of their health, and also their actual physical function. And the project involved setting up in four primary health care areas community based physical activities of a wide variety of which many people could attend in the local community, using church halls, bowling greens, community centres, and running a variety of classes such as indoor bowls, tea dancing, keep fit classes, and actually trying to encourage the community to participate in those activities and using the GP networks, so the project was based on physical activity but looking at the effects not of just physical activity on people's health but on longer term health care costs in the NHS, occupied bed days, admissions for fractured hip and things like that as well as GP use.

Jean Bell

When I first finished work I had to find something to do to fill my days. Because I was so active at work and I dreaded being off work because I didn't think I was going to have anything to do.

I'm not a person that can push in anywhere so I found that I had to join things. And then when we had this letter from the university to start these classes that was a big opening for me. I started nearly four years ago, well in August I think it was. And it started, there wasn't so many of us then and it was free because it was done through the university. They were hoping that it was going to help people keep away from the doctor's. And then they started swimming, in the October I think that was, something like that. And that started every Wednesday and then that is, that's been a big class. It's been good that. Personally I think it's been great for all the people that come and we, we've got quite a few people that's over eighty. And for them, well they look forward to coming with this lady that's ninety.. She comes when she can, she has to have her daughter to bring her up. Sometimes I take her back if her daughter can't fetch her. And it's, the company that they like as well. If they can't do, they sit out and they can talk. And I think that is, good as well for them.

ACTUALITY - Walk to the middle, bending your knees, slapping your partner, but on the hands.

It just makes us feel really fit. We really enjoy it and we, we're all losing weight by doing this, yes. You see they also weigh us, every other week and we are all losing weight. And I lost about five pounds. But I've just put six pounds on coz I've just come back off holiday.

ACTUALITY - Come to the middle, bend your knees. Slap Walk back

Well I do it because I've got a double hip replacement so I, you know it's to keep the muscles in trim. I've always done fitness things all my life so I would greatly miss it if I didn't do it. I think it keeps you in good trim. You know, you feel so much better.

ACTUALITY - And the last bit, walking, circling round, and going back to the opposite side

Irene Cooper

I'm ninety one, nearly ninety two.

I'm not much good with the legs but I can do all the others all right. I like coming.

I think it does loosen you up you know. Yes.

ACTUALITY - And one last time to end up where you started

Maxine Boot

We start off with a warm up mobilising the joints and increasing the body temperature and stretching. Preparing them for the aerobic content by practising moves that we're going to do in that. And we'll finish with the warm up we're do probably fifteen, twenty minutes of moving about to try and condition the heart and the lungs.. Following that we do strength work for arms and legs and finish off with some mobilising work for shoulders and ankles and hands and a stretch. But I try and incorporate er a section, for each aspect of fitness really. The strength and endurance, your flexibility aerobic fitness. And the motor fitness is what yeah. So that not only are we following moves just to condition heart and lungs. There might be a little bit of balancing involved or just to improve the co-ordination, balance, things that are going to help them at home again to you know perhaps keep them strong enough that they aren't going to fall. Or stuff like that.

Edward Liam

When I first started me co-ordination were really out. I mean I felt as if I'd fallen all over the place but now I've got into the rhythm, I've learned how to dance and, everything's – life's going really well. On alternate Mondays maybe learning to dance. Tuesdays we go bowling, at concord. Tuesday afternoon if you wish to go exercising St Thomas Moore's. Wednesday When't Baths reopened again, it'll be starting up with her swimming which of course, swimming Wednesday morning. Thursday there's a exercise group at Early Car. And then Friday we come to Grenoside and this is when I do my exercise more than anything....we've got a really group. A real good group. In fact there's twelve one that's just come back from Benidorm. As a bit of a group. And er, we are making friendship. I don't think we've had any fatalities. We may have had one but I mean out of a group like we are, which is better? And the people we met at first are much better today than they've ever been. My own body's great now. Like– you know me I say? I've got diabetes as well and I mean I've had a hernia, that were some years back. But personally yeah, physical fit. I, feel for my age I'm outstanding. And I mean I meet up with others I mean because I can swim well and, when I first started well when I tried to duck crawl I were just going in circles coz this arm were that weak (laughs) I used to just turn to one side like. But now well, anybody my age, they could challenge me to a good swim provided it's not too far.

Rachel Davey

The data from hospital admissions show that there is a slight reduction in all the primary causes for hospital admissions in the people that exercised when you compare them with the control group, but I have to qualify that by saying that we wont have the data completed until next year and fully written up. With regard to peoples perceived health there's a big change in how people perceive their health to have benefited from participating in the physical activity, and also from the physical function measures that we took they have improved vastly in people that regularly attend an exercise session. And there is a dose response relationship, a sort of crude dose response where you so that those that exercise irregularly have smaller benefits than those that go on a once or twice a weekly basis, there's a much higher increase in their physical function after.