

The benefits of face to face interactions for seniors

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Resistance Training and Older Adults' Beliefs About Psychological Benefits: The Importance of Self-Efficacy and Social Interaction

- ***Improved Physical Functioning.*** Many participants believed that the resistance training had improved their strength, balance, coordination, and fitness, which positively affected their physical (and mental) functioning and their ability to carry out “normal things” associated with daily living. In other words, it helped them remain independent for as long as possible.
- Participants said that involvement in resistance training makes them “feel good” mentally, and gave them a “sense of well-being.”
- Another key factor associated with feelings of good health and well-being was social interaction. The participants enjoyed the opportunities for positive social interaction (including social support and social influences) with general gym users, the other participants of the intervention, and particularly their student assistant. This theme has two key dimensions: the “atmosphere” and “intergenerational” interaction.
- The program also provided opportunities for the participants to socially engage with each other and the researchers, outside the gym context. For example, an information session was held and participants were encouraged to ask questions and discuss how they were finding the program so far. Before the session began, participants sat outside and spoke to each other about their experiences and wrote down common questions that were then discussed with the researchers in the meeting. Also, a recognition luncheon and, at the end of the program, a presentation evening were held with the students. At the presentation, coffee, tea, and biscuits were available before the formal procedures began and the author observed the participants talking and laughing with one another and the students. In their interviews, all the participants provided positive

comments about these meetings, such as “the openness has been . . . excellent” and “very useful, very helpful.”

- **“Intergenerational” Interaction.** In addition, the majority of participants developed a uniquely positive relationship with their student supervisor. They believed that “intergenerational” contact or “the social side” with the student was a major benefit of the program.