

COMPITO 1 – NEEDFINDING

Introduction

This project focuses on the theme of everyday physical well-being on campus, specifically on how students can integrate short active breaks during their academic day. Many students spend long periods sitting in lectures, study rooms, or common areas, which leads to physical inactivity, reduced concentration, and discomfort.

The aim of this needfinding phase is to observe and understand students' behaviours, difficulties, motivations, and needs, in order to define a meaningful direction for the design phase.

Group Members

The group consists of only one member that is me Jesus Mantas Villafranca

Domain of Interest and Motivation

I chose the domain of light physical activity and well-being on campus because it represents a widespread issue among students at the Politecnico di Milano. University routines often involve many hours of sitting, and although students express a desire to improve their physical well-being, they rarely manage to integrate healthy habits into their daily schedules.

Transforming the campus into an environment that naturally encourages movement and active breaks could have a significant positive impact on both physical health and study quality.

Methodology

I conducted 4 qualitative interviews with students living in my residence or whom I met around the Polimi campus.

Each interview lasted between 35 and 50 minutes.

I took written notes because I was only one member and could not do everything alone. Before starting each interview, I obtained informed consent using the template provided on WeBeep.

Materials Used: Notebook for taking notes

Interview Locations: Campus library, Study rooms, Outdoor areas of the campus, Common areas inside my residence

Participants

Glulia - Direct User (Computer Engineering)

- 20 years old
- Computer Engineering student
- Spends many hours sitting in the computer labs and study rooms
- Lives in a student residence.

Why she was selected: Represents a typical engineering student with long sedentary study sessions and little spontaneous physical activity, exactly aligned with the project's theme.

Marco - Extreme/Guide User (Telecommunications Engineering)

- 23 years old
- Telecommunications Engineering student
- Very physically active (practices calisthenics and runs regularly)
- Frequently moves around campus between different labs and buildings

Why he was selected: Has much higher-than-average physical activity and provides insights on motivation, energy management, and routines that help maintain an active lifestyle even with a demanding engineering schedule.

Sara - Indirect User (Industrial Engineering)

- 23 years old.
- Industrial Engineering student
- Not sporty; suffers from back and neck pain.
- Spends long hours sitting in libraries and computer rooms.

Why she was selected: Offers a perspective of someone who does not seek sports but wants relief from physical discomfort caused by sedentary engineering workload.

Luca - Extreme User (Highly Sedentary - Computer Engineering)

- 21 years old
- Computer Engineering student.
- Spends 10 - 12 hours of the day programming, studying or gaming.
- Has tried fitness app but cannot remain consistent

Why he was selected (extreme sedentary user): Represents the far end of sedentary behaviour, extremely common among computer engineering students, and highlights barriers like lack of motivation and simple routines.

Interview Results

Key quotes

From "Giulia"

"When I study, I don't realise I've been sitting for two hours." "If someone reminded me, I would stand up and move."

From "Marco"

“The key is knowing *when* to stop, not how to move.” “Even a very short route inside the campus can reset your energy.”

From “Sara”

“My back hurts but I keep studying because I don’t want to lose momentum.”

“I don’t need a workout, just a small push to move every now and then.”

From “Luca”

“I’ve tried many apps, but none really fit my daily routine.”

“If it’s not simple and immediate, I end up doing nothing.”

Observations

- Most students completely lose track of time while studying.
- Active breaks are not part of anyone's daily routine
- There is social discomfort of embarrassment when moving in public areas of the campus.
- Students don't know which campus spaces are appropriate for stretching or light movement.
- All participants mentioned physical discomfort associated with long periods of sitting (stiffness, back pain, mental fatigue).

User Needs (Needs as Verbs)

Needs must be expressed as verbs, not solutions.

The user needs to:

- have a way to remember to take active breaks during the day.
- be able to identify when it is the right moment to move.
- know what simple exercise to do depending on where they are.
- move without feeling judged by others.
- see clearly how long they have been sitting.
- perform very short activities without losing study rhythm.
- receive light, non-intrusive motivation.
- find campus spaces where they can move freely.
- adapt the activity to their physical condition.

Most Relevant Needs for the Design Phase

- Remembering to take active breaks.
- Receiving quick and context-based suggestions.
- Understanding how long they have been sedentary.
- Feeling comfortable moving within the campus.
- Receiving motivation that is gentle but consistent.

Initial User–Goal Mapping (Summary)

Direct user (Giulia): wants to stay active while studying.

Extreme active user (Marco): wants to optimise his daily energy levels.

Indirect user (Sara): wants to reduce physical discomfort.

Extreme sedentary user (Luca): wants to start without mental effort.