

## Forget couple's workouts, the secret to healthy ageing may be hitting the gym solo



[Matthew Hart](#)

Jan 18, 2024



The study found that those flying solo tend to achieve higher physical activity levels. Source: Getty Images.

[In the quest for healthier ageing](#), a study from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, suggests that hitting the gym solo might be the smarter move for older adults. The research, conducted by the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, explored the exercise habits of 240 participants aged 54 to 72.

Contrary to the belief that couples who work out together stay healthier together, the study found that those flying solo tend to achieve higher physical activity levels. Armed with personalised fitness trackers, participants were divided into groups of couples and individuals, some receiving real-time feedback and others exercising unaware of their step counts.

Dr. Sapphire Lin, the lead researcher, explained the findings, saying, “The average participant in our study is 60 years old and has been married to and living with the same spouse for 30 years.”

“This suggests that the study participants have well-established routines that do not necessarily include exercising with their spouse,” Lin explained. “For these couples, changing daily habits could require a major reshuffling of set habits and routines ingrained in their family life after years of marriage. This makes incorporating exercise difficult and could lead to a demotivating effect.”

As part of the study, researchers collected data over 12 weeks on how consistently the participants met daily step thresholds of 5,000, 7,500, 10,000, and 15,000 steps, as well as their daily mean and median number of steps.

It was discovered that participants who took part in the study as a couple had lower mean and median step counts. They also met the high daily step counts of 7,500, 10,000 and 15,000 less frequently than those who participated individually without their spouses.

The researchers suggest that achieving higher levels of physical activity for couples demands a significant overhaul of their lifestyle dynamics. This insight encourages a shift in perspective, proposing that promoting behavioural or lifestyle changes, such as [increased physical activity](#), may be more effective when tailored to the individual needs of older adults rather than targeting couples collectively.

Research Fellow at the Centre for Population Health Research and Implementation, SingHealth, Dr Lin said, “Our research suggests that older adults looking to introduce exercise into their lifestyles may find it more effective to focus on changing their own routines rather than attempting to exercise as a couple and seeking to impose changes on their partner.”

The research team is currently delving deeper into the findings, conducting a thorough analysis to shape policies aimed at promoting active ageing among seniors.

**IMPORTANT LEGAL INFO** This article is of a general nature and FYI only, because it doesn't take into account your personal health requirements or existing medical conditions. That means it's not personalised health advice and shouldn't be relied upon as if it is. Before making a health-related decision, you should work out if the info is appropriate for your situation and get professional medical advice.

<https://startsat60.com/media/news/forget-couples-workouts-the-secret-to-healthy-ageing-may-be-hitting-the-gym-solo>