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### Do you exercise with your other half? Here's why it wouldn't be such a good idea, according to a study: Femme Actuelle Le MAG

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With sport, everyone has their own preferences and little habits. For some, practicing physical activity can seem boring or strenuous when you are alone, **while being together can change the situation**. If we take running for example, running with your loved one can immediately seem more pleasant, or even more effective with the motivation that becomes one. And yet, according to a new study, practicing a sporting activity together would not be **not so beneficial**. Explanations.

#### How the presence of a spouse can affect the level of physical activity

Led by a team from Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, the study was interested in **physical activity level of older people**. To carry out their analysis, the scientists observed data from 240 men and women living in Singapore, **aged 54 to 72**. All received a fitness

tracker, which recorded several information including the number of steps, the number of minutes of activity, heart rate, distance traveled, calories burned as well as sleep data.

All participants were married and living with their spouse, aged between 54 and 72 years. They were divided into four groups: two groups, i.e. 30 couples, **who played sports as a couple** and two groups, i.e. 60 individuals, **who trained alone**. Then, half of the participants received real-time monitoring of their physical condition thanks to their tracker, while the other half deactivated the tracking of the tracker. The researchers then analyzed the regularity with which participants reached the thresholds of 5,000, 7,500, 10,000 and 15,000 steps per day, as well as the average and median number of steps per day, all over 12 weeks.

## Fewer daily steps among couples who exercise together

Researchers observed that people who exercised with their spouse showed a **lower level of physical activity** to that of people who were alone. As the authors explain in a press release, although previous studies have found positive effects of exercising with a friend, this new research shows that people in couples had a **lower average and median number of steps** than those who participated individually. Furthermore, they reached **less often** the thresholds of 7,500, 10,000 and 15,000 daily steps. According to researchers, encouraging older people to **exercising individually could be more effective** as a couple to promote physical fitness.

*"Our study suggests that older adults who want to introduce physical exercise into their lifestyle may find **more effective to focus on changing their own habits** rather than trying to exercise as a couple and trying to impose changes on their partner",* commented Sapphire Lin, author of the study.

## Real-time tracking beneficial for physical activity

At the same time, scientists also noticed that people who received **personalized tracking on their fitness tracker were more active** than those who did not have one. Clearly, people who had tracking reached 7,500 and 10,000 daily steps **more frequently**. For the authors, monitoring therefore has a positive effect on the physical activity of older adults. This observation can be explained by the fact that monitoring highlights the discrepancies between current physical activity and the targeted physical activity. Additionally, receiving follow-up that indicates they achieved their goals allows them to believe in their ability, *"which translates to **continued motivation for a physically active lifestyle**"*, they write. So during your next run, perhaps it will be better to take your connected watch with you, and let your loved one...

### Sources:

- Motivating Physical Activity with Fitness Tracking and the Interpersonal Context – *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*
- Older adults who exercise with spouse may be less physically active: Study – Nanyang Technological University of Singapore

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