

Imagery and physical activity: Can imagery help physical activity adherence in women?

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There are ample benefits associated with physical activity. However, rates of sedentary behavior remain high in women (Chomistek et al., 2013). Imagery use can help increase exercise-motivation in women (Duncan et al., 2012). This study investigated select psychophysiological effects of motivational imagery use during exercise. Forty-five participants (22 males, 23 females) were randomly assigned to either control, motivational imagery-1, or motivational imagery-2 groups. Participants performed a progressive cycling task. Perceived effort (PE), attention allocation, time on task, lactate accumulation (LA), and heart rate (HR) were monitored and assessed during exercise. Results indicated that participants using imagery spent the longest time on task ($M = 420.40$ seconds, $SD = 344.87$) as opposed to the ones who were using no imagery ($M = 377.20$, $SD = 290.52$). Participants using imagery also reported the highest PE ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.312$) as opposed to the ones using no imagery ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.312$). Participants using imagery also reported the highest attention focus ($M = 5.42$, $SD = .368$) as opposed to the ones using no imagery ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .368$). No significant condition effect was observed for LA: $F(2, 40) = .11$, $p = .899$, and HR, $F(2, 36) = .12$, $p = .886$. In conclusion, in this mix sample, the use of imagery seemed to increase exercise-related effort, optimize attention focus, and prolong time on task. Additional studies should further investigate the effects of this cost-effective strategy to help exercise adherence and advance the problem of sedentariness in a sample of women.

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References

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