

Propositions

accompanying the dissertation

Self-control failures and physical inactivity:
Measuring, understanding and intervening

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1. Economists need to go beyond the mathematically convenient present bias model in seeking to understand self-control failures in physical activity (Chapters 2 and 3).
2. Although the focus is generally on those that fail to do as much physical activity as they had planned, the number of people who do *more* than they planned is in fact substantial (Chapter 3).
3. Simply giving people feedback on their past self-control failures in physical activity is not effective in helping them to predict future self-control failures (Chapter 4).
4. Understanding the role that automatic processes play in self-control failures is crucial to designing effective physical activity interventions (Chapters 2, 3 and 5).
5. The large degree of heterogeneity in physical activity preferences and behaviors means that tailored physical activity interventions are likely to be more cost effective than one-size-fits-all approaches (Chapters 3 and 5).
6. When important variables are too difficult to measure objectively, it is better to measure them using self-report and stated preference approaches than not to measure them at all.
7. In youth sports, overemphasis on winning and on the most gifted athletes turns many children off physical activity, and has adverse long-term public health implications.
8. Health behaviour interventions that aren't built on a solid foundation of both theoretical and empirical evidence have a higher probability of failure.

9. People overestimate the benefits of physical activity for weight control, and underestimate its many other substantial health benefits (e.g., mental health, musculoskeletal health, cardiovascular disease prevention).
10. Combining environmental-level and individual-level physical activity interventions is likely to be more effective than focusing on only one of these approaches.
11. “If all the year were playing holidays, To sport would be as tedious as to work, But when they seldom come, they wished-for come, And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.” Prince Hal in *King Henry IV*, by William Shakespeare.