

Review of Research on Exercise and Fitness Motives

Among the earlier and more influential scholarly efforts to classify the reasons why people engage in the many forms of physical activity was the work of Gerald Kenyon (1968). Kenyon developed a theoretical model in which he hypothesized six sub domains to explain the instrumental value of physical activity. Kenyon's sub domains and a brief description of each follow:

1. **Physical Activity as a Social Experience.** This assumes that involvement in some form of physical activity can meet some of the social needs of certain participants. Some physical activities provide a medium for meeting new people or perpetuating existing relationships.
2. **Physical Activity for Health and Fitness.** This sub domain subsumes involvement that has as its primary purpose the development or enhancement of health and physical fitness.
3. **Physical Activity as the Pursuit of Vertigo.** Kenyon modified the more traditional meaning of the term vertigo to apply to activities which involve risk, danger, or the element of thrill

through speed or acceleration constitute this category and are represented by such activities as skiing, mountain climbing, and sky diving.

4. Physical Activity as an Aesthetic Experience.

Those forms of physical activity which appeal to participants because of their characteristics of beauty, grace, symmetry or other artistic qualities comprise this motive. Ballet, synchronized swimming, aspects of gymnastics, aerobic dance, and other activities which involve creative expression through movement are representative of physical activity as an aesthetic experience.

5. Physical Activity as Catharsis. The belief that physical activity can provide a release from frustration and pent-up emotions resulting from the stresses and strains of modern life is the crux of this sub domain.

6. Physical Activity as an Ascetic Experience. The willingness of desire to endure long, strenuous, and often painful training and delay of gratification while in pursuit of a goal characterizes physical activity as an ascetic experience. Training for a marathon or a run up

(and down) Pikes Peak, or perhaps preparing for the decathlon are examples.