

Move It Or Lose It

Hello, I'm Julie Robertson and I'm the founder of Move it or Lose it and we help older people and those with long term health conditions to stay active so they can enjoy healthier happier lives. I'd like to share with you some of the things that we've been doing and had to change to try and help people during these difficult times during social distancing and lock down. So, I'm going to share a short presentation to just put you in the picture about things that we want to do and hope that some of these might be helpful to you as well.

So, it's all about helping people to live longer and better and we have a training programme. We help instructors to work all across the country running their classes normally in community and care settings, but we also have a range of other things that we are doing and have changed to do so that we can help people to stay active at home as well.

So, who are these older adults? Well we've got a little bit of this stereotyping going on as you see from the road sign that actually depicts elderly people and the centre for Ageing Better put out a competition to see can we change our perception, who are these older adults do they really look like this? Well that was the new road sign that came out of their competition. So of course not everybody who is older becomes frail and incapacitated we got people running marathons in their 90s and weight lifting and so on, but we do recognise the fact that there's a lot that needs to be done to make sure that we have more of those fit onto people than not.

So, the ageing world, of course we know that the demographics are constantly growing, and this is globally too. What's really startling is that if we look at the fact that by 2050 across the world, over 21% of people will be aged over 60, when we go back to 1980 that was just over 8% so that's a vast difference. And we must change an awful lot about the way we live to make sure that we are living longer better. I think the Queen is not going to be able to send out enough cards to the people who reach 100 soon. People like captain Tom here who has done so much to help the perception of being older doesn't mean giving up there is still so much to do.

So, what we've got to look at is the health span; it isn't just those years. It is making sure that we don't spend such a long time in ill health in later life and that currently stands on average around 18 years. So we know that those lifestyle factors make a huge difference in this health span so it isn't just our waistline that may be expanding from the food we eat or our inactivity leading these sedentary lives and smoking and drinking and so on, but it's going to cost to put on weight and perhaps have more propensity to type 2 diabetes and other health conditions that come with that. But it's what's happening at a deeper cellular level how it's affecting our telomere length and this is what is termed now as inflammaging, so it's the inflammaging that's occurring that we can't see until we find that this is actually behind some health related conditions that people are finding they get as they age.

So, what can we do, who we are and what are we doing at Move it or Lose it? Well we want to ensure that accessible fitness sessions are available to as many older people as possible and this is about bringing people together to socialise and exercise. And the two are important so its not just about physical health, its about mental health and social opportunity, that's important for our mental health and wellbeing.

Well, the classes, what do they look like? They are fun; it's about making sure people enjoy it so people come back week after week and our adherence levels are absolutely fantastic standing at over 90%, which given that we work with people who are 60, 70, 80, 90 and even into their 100s is fantastic. It's a sociable occasion, it's a warm welcoming environment where we adapt the exercises

to make sure everybody can participate. Whether they are sitting in a wheelchair, need to remain seated, or whether they can be up on their feet and be more active, everybody can join in. We use music as well, its great motivation, the exercises are effective and it's about creating a sense of community, whether that's within a community centre or in a care setting.

So how does exercise help? Well the research is just outstanding when we look at other people's research we can see how it can help with reducing pain, from especially the joint conditions such as arthritis and reduce the long term health conditions and help people live with better self-esteem with better levels of independence. Really important that we ensure people don't lose that muscle strength and mass, so they stay strong and able to do the things they enjoy for longer. And of course, its also important to try and ensure we prevent Alzheimer's and dementia, that mild cognitive impairment too.

But what about our evaluations, how have we proved what we do is working? Well we've worked with a whole variety of organisations and charities at the NHS and universities, and what we have found consistently, whatever the setting is that we are able to improve that physical function. So, it's about improving that gait speed, strength with sit to stand, we do the 30 second sit to stand test very frequently to be able to track peoples progress as well. It's about improving their overall sense of wellbeing, their mobility their confidence and reducing their levels of anxiety and loneliness. We found as well in the NHS classes that we ran with patients with COPD in the doctor's surgeries that we were able to help people reduce the amount of medication that they needed too. And although we can do a lot of statistical evaluation, it does come down to at the end of the day how it makes people feel, because the best exercise that you do is the one that you do regularly, so we make sure people want to come back to our classes time after time.

So we want to look at this positive circle and once we can get people through the door and increase their levels of physical activity, so not just that once a week class but helping them do things at home which is then going to help them enjoy the benefits of increased independence and being able to get out and about to do things. Making sure that we break down these barriers of people thinking you can't or shouldn't do this type of exercise just because your getting older. In fact you'll see Jenny there sitting with a ball and she's 97 and she walks home from the weekly class which is over a mile and a half and that's phenomenal, what a role model to show we can enjoy exercise at any age.

So, we put the four vital components into our exercise programme, this is an endorsed and accredited exercise programme and includes flexibility, aerobics, balance and strength. We want people to feel fabulous. All the exercises are related to activities in daily living. So there's real purpose for wanting to do them, not just to improve shoulder mobility, this is about I'm really struggling to reach the top shelf or wash my hair or hang the washing so its making sure these exercises mean something to the participants.

Aerobics exercise is of course at a real different range of intensities to suit different people so that we can keep that level of cardiovascular fitness so they can still get out and about, lockdown permitting, for more social interaction.

Balance, of course vital for everybody, but particularly as we age as we want to prevent the first fall or give people back their confidence if they have already had a fall. So not in a structured programme, they just need those exercises to improve their strength and balance.

Talking of strength that is the bit that really is missing quite often from peoples work outs as they are getting older. It's to prevent sarcopenia that loss of muscle that occurs post 50 particularly but especially if we are sitting down for longer, which has most definitely occurred over lockdown.

And deconditioning has now been termed as the second pandemic which may sound dramatic but when you think of the millions of older people who can't get out, who may not have gardens or safe places to walk and for them, their weekly class was really important. They may live in a small place where they feel that they can't really do much exercise and they are sitting down more, becoming more inactive, and starting this downwards cycle of decline. And of course, as they are sitting down more, they are doing less they feel like doing less and down we sink and eventually they can become extremely socially isolated and lonely, leading to a higher risk of depression too. So, we have something called the cuppa routine which you can print out available to anyone who can get in touch with me and its available on YouTube as well. It's a short video, this is what you can do when the kettle is boiling and only 2 and a half minutes that you can do as the kettle boils which is four exercises 10 repetitions of each one. We have found this to be so effective that we have even made it into a tea towel to remind and nudge someone into regular activity to help break up the sitting time throughout the day.

We are mindful of people in care homes, nursing homes and those in hospital so we have developed a get up and go app which is free for anybody to use and this is to help people from any bed from a chair. It was filmed in a hospital situation so that we can show you can do these exercises from the bed and from the chair. They are very simple and mobilising exercises that are the sort of things you can do to help you get up, get dressed, and get moving, you don't need physiotherapists for these. You might have a volunteer which could be helping in normal times or it could be a family member or the individual themselves who can do these exercises themselves by simply watching on their tablet or phone.

We do know that those who cannot get online are at a big disadvantage so with a small pot of funding we have been trialling this book band and phone call in an area of deprivation in Birmingham and its something we want to roll out across to other areas, because its so effective. So, participants receive a book, with clear explanations with adaptations to make them easier or harder. They receive a resistance band vital for their strength and regular phone calls to walk them through the exercises, to establish what they need and how they can be helped by doing certain exercises. But what they get from that phone call is that wonderful sense of feeling that somebody cares and that someone will check up on them, they just need a chat. So, it's a big combination and we would love for that to become a more frequent offering for people who can't get online.

So over lockdown and beyond we have had a Covid support pack, do get in touch if you want to find out more about all the things we have been doing and are continuing to do so to support older people. We started a Facebook live session in the 1st lockdown and had over 350,000 views over 12 weeks. And also as I mentioned we had the sit to stand exercise which we turned into a bit of a challenge which we called Stand up for the NHS and we are incredibly lucky to have the wonderful gold medallist Tessa Sampson as our ambassador to promote this across the country. So, its just up and down from your chair, 30 seconds how many can you do and then track your progress, try to improve. If you can improve by 25% over 12 weeks, then you can actually be turning back the clock by ten years in terms of your muscle function and that's a fantastic thing to do. It takes 30 seconds and all you need is a strong upright chair. So do get in touch if you'd like to find out more about that as well.

Now with funding from the National Lottery and Sport England and support from EMD UK we are absolutely delighted to launch our new Move it or Lose it club with all the things we would usually have in our classes, online. So, it isn't just about watching an exercise video, the club has three sections. The exercise, social club and live club. Exercise club is on demand and all the exercises are from our instructors so that our customers can still feel connected and other people who have never

attended a class before can get a feel for this. They are 5 minutes to 45 minutes from strength and circuits and HIIT and even a little taster of ballet, mindfulness and relaxation along with our traditional classes to music. We've got the social club where people can chat a little like Facebook but in a really safe welcoming environment where people can get to know each other as well. And we've got our live club which is a bit like your virtual village hall so that we're having people show us different hobbies and skills. We've had talks every week. One of our instructors, who's a pharmacist giving that medical advice on your medication. We've had book club, healthy eating, quiz nights and all the things people are asking for, so it keeps them active and connected. We've had some amazing feedback about how this is changing their lives and people have a purpose, a sense of purpose something to look forward to everyday there is something new to look forward to and knowing that you can drop in an exercise whenever you chose. We are trying to give away as many of these club memberships as we can and then when it is purchased it is only £0.16 a day.