

Running head: INCREASING RUNNING FREQUENCY

Behavior Modification Project:

Increase Running Frequency

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Objective

Description

The observed behavior for this behavior modification project was my lack of sufficient physical exercise. This became a problem to me when I noticed that I had gained a bit of weight and my favorite pair of jeans became a little too tight. I realized that I had been eating out almost every other day. I had also reduced my regular habit of running four days a week, to around one day week.

Goal

The goal of this project was to increase my response strength towards running. My current behavior was running once a week for approximately 20-minute duration. The desired increase in running sessions was from once a week to at least four days a week.

Technique

Rules

I imposed a rule that I must run at least four days a week. This could be accomplished at any time of day. The run could be around the park next to my house or on the treadmill at the gym. The duration of the run must be at least twenty minutes.

Reinforcement

The schedule of reinforcement was a FR 4/7 runs. If I ran at least four days I would be rewarded. My reward was a dinner and movie date with my husband on Sunday night. I got to choose the restaurant and the movie. This was considered a reinforcement for me because I rarely get to go to the movies.

Punishment

The schedule of punishment was a FR 0-3/7 runs. If I failed to run at all or if I ran less than four days I was punished at the end of the week. My punishment was to take an aversive shot of wheatgrass juice. Wheatgrass juice is a punishment for me because the taste is very aversive.

Results

Calendar

24 X	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 X	1 X	2	3	4 X	5	6 X
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 X	15	16 X	17 X	18 X	19	20
21	22 X	23	24 X	25	26	27

An X on the calendar above indicates that the task was accomplished. The calendar represents the end of October and the beginning of November. The first week is the baseline week, during this week the behavior was tracked without the use of reinforcement or punishment. The following two weeks are implementation of the project. During these weeks I received reinforcement the second week and punishment the third week. The last week of the month was the follow up week. During this week the behavior was tracked without the use of reinforcement or punishment.

Detailed Results

The behavior was observed once during the baseline week. The total for baseline was 1/7. The anticipatory effect of the upcoming reinforcement was enough to increase the behavior the first week. The total for week one was 4/7. I was rewarded on the sixth with a sushi dinner and the movie “The Weather Man”. Although the reinforcement was sufficient, it did not motivate me enough during week two. The total for week two was 0/7. I was punished with a shot of wheatgrass juice on the thirteenth. Week three I had a renewed interest in the project and forced myself to increase my response strength. The total for week three was 4/7. I was rewarded on the twentieth with Chinese dinner and the movie “Walk the Line”. During the fourth week or follow up, the response strength was increased from the baseline, but without the motivation of a reward on Sunday, I did not fulfill the required four days of running. The total for week four was 2/7. The total for the project was 10/16 possible days or 57.14% of the goal.

Conclusion

Summary

This behavior modification project was not a success. I did increase the response strength from baseline, but not to the extent that was my goal. I believe that the response strength was increased simply because the feeling after running was the real reinforcer. There are many things I would change if I did this project again.

Advantages

The advantages of the behavior modification project were plentiful. Everything we learned over the course was put to use through this project. This project helped me to learn which reinforcers and punishers are motivating to me. I will use the information to

increase or decrease my own behaviors in the future. This project helped me to understand why I procrastinate and put off my exercising on a regular basis.

Disadvantages

The duration of my particular project was not long enough. Two months would have been sufficient to increase the frequency of my physical exercise. I also learned that self punishment does not work for me. The punishment was not quick enough or often enough. It did not directly strengthen the desired behavior. I learned that I do not respond well to imposed rules and have a problem with authority (even if the authority is myself).

Future Projects

I should have used continuous reinforcement. I could have stretched the ratio, slowly moving the reinforcer from a dense to a lean schedule. I noticed that on the days that I did not accomplish the task, I had sat down to watch television. Therefore, I should have used The Premack Principle allowing myself to watch television only if I had run that day. I should have had someone else administer the punishment and reinforcement immediately following the desired or undesired behavior.