



The Impact of Personal Physical Activity Tracking on Retention



www.trpcem.com

Which Members Use Self-Monitoring Apps?

In this report we extend our research into the impact of personal physical activity tracking on retention by looking at which members use fitness tracking applications (apps), what this tells you about their reasons for visiting their club and how this affects their progress.

Data and analysis

Approximately 27% of members report self-monitoring their physical activity using an app, product or system; with a phone or web app being the most popular method.

For the rest of this article we will use the term 'app' to describe any type of self-monitoring device.

Using an app for monitoring exercise is most common among members aged under 25 years, with 40% reporting they do so. Tracking gradually reduces with age, with members aged 45 years and older 80% less likely to monitor their fitness than under 25's. Males are 20% more likely to use an app than females and using an app is most common among members who were in months 6 to 12 of their membership. App use is least common among new members (less than 6 months) and the most long-standing members (3 years or longer).

The number of clubs a member has belonged to prior to their current club is positively associated with app use. Approximately a fifth (19.9%) of members who are new to using a gym report using an app compared to 35% of members who have belonged to at least 3 previous clubs. However, club visit frequency is unrelated to app use (after taking account of differences in age).

Due to the strength of the effect of age and length of membership on app use, all other estimates of app use in this report will be adjusted for these two factors.

App users were more likely to state their main reason for visiting their club as being to take part in a gym workout, group cycling class or personal training session compared to non-app users. App use did not differ between members who said they usually visit their club for a group exercise class (not group cycling), swimming or non-exercise reasons. When visiting their clubs, younger app users are more likely to be spoken to by fitness staff than younger non-app users but this is not true for older members.

Do app users have different exercise motivations compared to non-app users?

Compared to non-app users, app using members are more likely to say the reasons they are motivated to exercise are because they like and enjoy the gym, like to be with others who enjoy the gym and want to meet new people.

They are less likely to be motivated by fitness and health and wellbeing. Motives such as changing shape and appearance, getting stronger and losing weight were equally reported between app users and non-app users.

Do app users report more progress than non-app users?

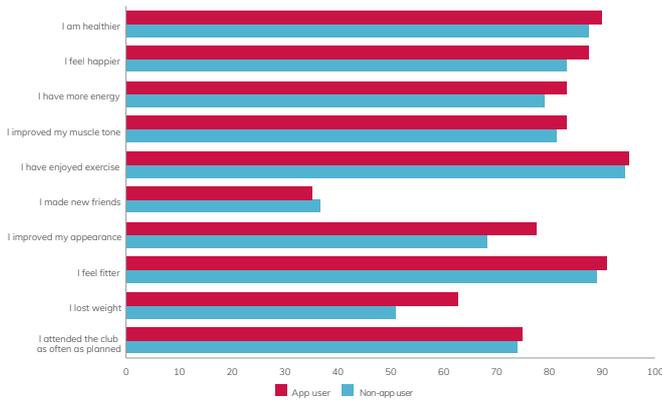
App use was positively associated with members' reports of progress over the 3 months prior to completing the questionnaire for the survey. In particular, app users were more likely to report losing weight, feeling fitter, improving the way they looked, improved muscle tone, having more energy and feeling happier and healthier compared to non-app users. No significant association was observed between app use and reported progress with making new friends and enjoying exercise.

Indeed, members not motivated by enjoyment who did enjoy exercise in the 3 months prior to completing the questionnaire were less likely to be app users compared to members who did not report enjoying exercise. Because members were asked about their progress at the same time as app use it is not possible to determine the direction of the relationship between reported progress and app use. It is equally possible that members who have made recent progress choose to use fitness apps as it is using fitness apps leads to progress. When considered all together, progress on weight loss and having more energy were most strongly associated with app use.



Which Members Use Self-Monitoring Apps?

Figure 1. Proportion of members reporting progress by app use



What is the effect of app use on membership retention?

App users cancel their membership at a rate of 22 members per thousand per month compared to 18 members per thousand per month in non-app users – an excess of 4 cancellations every month for every thousand members that start the month. Because app use is associated with a range of other factors related to the risk of cancelling, it is important to take this into account. After taking account of differences in age, gender, length of membership and visit frequency, app users are approximately 10% more likely to cancel their membership each month compared to non-app users.

Because age and sex are strongly related to both app use and retention, we ran the analysis separately for members aged 25 years and less and members over 25 years of age by sex. In younger, male members there was no association between app use and risk of cancelling whereas in the older male members the risk of cancelling each month was 23% higher in app users. In females, there was no relationship between app use and increased risk of cancellation.

Figure 2. Cancellation rates by app use and age for male members

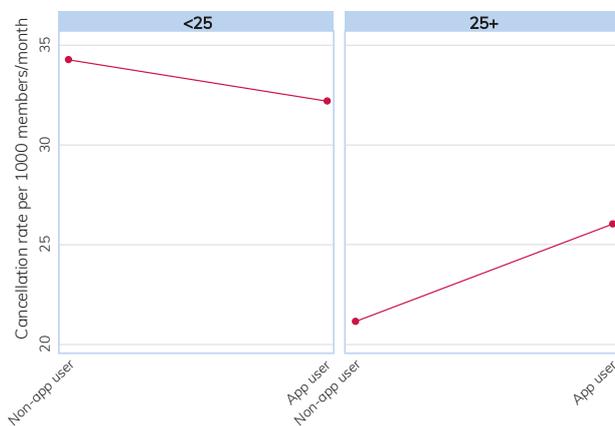


Figure 3. Cancellation rates by app use and age for female members

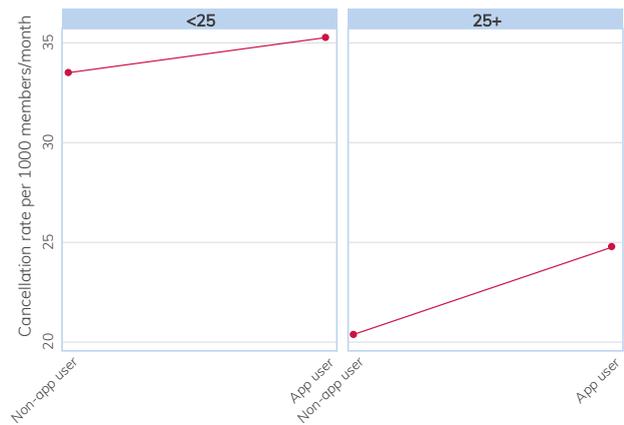


Figure 4. Retention rates by app use and age for male members

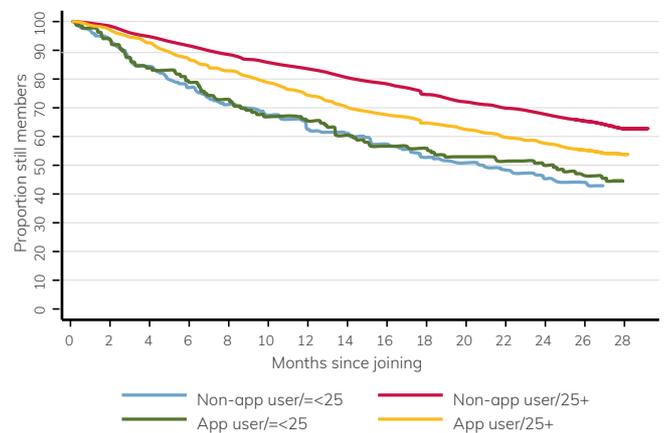
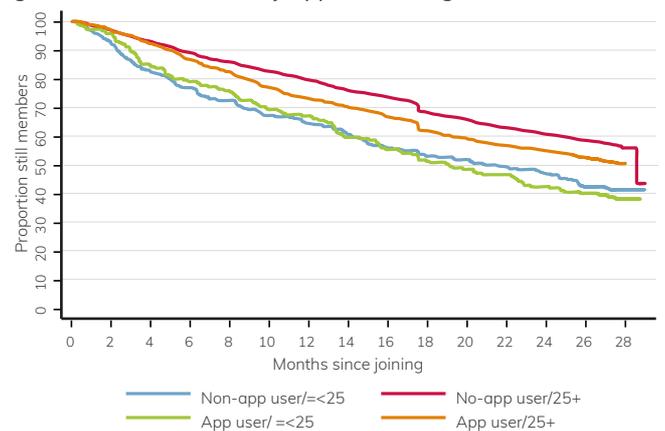


Figure 5. Retention rates by app use and age for female members



Which Members Use Self-Monitoring Apps?

An interesting aside in this analysis is that in the older age group, for both males and females, enjoying exercise reduced the risk of cancelling by over 25%. However, if younger males reported being motivated to exercise by enjoyment but didn't report enjoying it the risk of cancelling each month increased by 50% compared to younger males who were not expecting exercise to be enjoyable.

Summary

App users have a tendency to be younger males who enjoy gym workouts, group cycling classes and being around other gym members. They are more likely to be experienced gym users rather than members who are new to gyms. In general, they report making more progress in a range of outcomes compared to non-app users, although app users who say they are not motivated by the enjoyment of exercise are less likely to report actually enjoying it. Overall, app use is not strongly related to membership retention. However, in male members aged over 25 app use is associated with a 23% increase in the monthly risk of cancellation.





creating
raving fans

Regional Headquarters

UK & Rest-of-World

18 Monmouth Place
Bath, BA1 2AY

Email: sales@trpcem.com
Tel: +44 (0) 845 621 2001

North America

67 Froehlich Farm Blvd
Woodbury, NY 11797
USA

Email: northamerica@trpcem.com
US Tollfree: +1-800-951-8048