




INTEGRATING FITNESS AND HEALTH IN HEALTHCARE

**DR FADZIL HAMZAH
(EXERCISE IS MEDICINE SINGAPORE)**

INDUSTRY INSIDER | #012

EX/PRO

DR FADZIL HAMZAH

A circular portrait of Dr Fadzil Hamzah, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and blue tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The portrait is set against a light grey background and is framed by a thick, red, brush-stroke-like border.

Dr Fadzil Hamzah practises at the Department of Sport and Exercise Medicine in Changi General Hospital and is the operational lead for Singapore Sport and Exercise Medicine Centre at Singapore General Hospital. He also looks after the health of our national athletes in Team Singapore and is a visiting clinician at Singapore Sports Institute.

Administratively, Dr Fadzil wears multiple hats in various key health and healthcare organisations. He is the Director of Community Programmes for Exercise is Medicine Singapore (EIMS), as well the Community Director for SingHealth Duke-NUS Sport and Exercise Medicine Centre (SDDC-SEM). He is very passionate in promoting fitness, health and physical activity, as well as supporting citizen-centric and last mile service delivery for the underserved and underprivileged in the community.

Dr Fadzil is the healthcare lead for M3 (an alliance of 3 key national Malay organisations -MESRA, Mendaki and MUIS) at Bedok and Tampines towns, and also the chairperson for the physical activity subcommittee under the Ministry of Health-Health Promotion Board Malay Community Outreach (MCO). In addition, he also serves as a Board Member of Yellow Ribbon Singapore, Muslim Trust Fund Association (MTFA) Dialysis Centre and PSB Academy Science Industry Advisory Panel, as well as a grassroots leader in Tampines Central Citizens' Consultative Committee. He is also the Deputy Director for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in the SingHealth Office of Regional Health.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE FITNESS PROFESSIONAL IN HEALTHCARE?

Fitness professionals play a crucial role in the healthcare industry by providing preventative measures and promoting overall health and well-being. They can work in a variety of settings, such as gyms, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and physical activity resources in the community.

Fitness professionals utilise their knowledge of exercise physiology, nutrition, and injury prevention to design individualised fitness plans and programs for their clients. By working closely with healthcare providers, they can help individuals such as those with chronic medical conditions and individuals from special populations, e.g. children, pregnant women, elderly, as well as those with physical disabilities and special needs to achieve their health and fitness goals, manage chronic conditions, and prevent future health problems.

Moreover, fitness professionals can also collaborate with healthcare professionals to develop wellness programs and initiatives for companies and organisations, helping to reduce healthcare costs and absenteeism, and improve productivity and employee satisfaction. Overall, the role of fitness professionals is critical in shaping a healthier society and promoting a more proactive approach to healthcare.

This is aligned to our national thrusts of moving beyond healthcare to health, beyond hospital to community, and beyond quality to value; to sustain quality healthcare for everyone as the demand rises.

WHY IS EXERCISE PRE-PARTICIPATION SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

Exercise pre-participation screening is important because it allows individuals to assess their readiness and suitability for physical activity. It helps to identify potential health risks and conditions that may pose a risk during exercise, especially in individuals with chronic medical conditions. The screening process can help to prevent injuries, improve safety, and ensure that individuals are engaging in activities that are appropriate for their current level of physical fitness and health. Additionally, pre-participation screening can help to identify any potential barriers to participation, such as lack of access to facilities or equipment.

For the fitness professionals, the information gathered from the various screening procedures will govern the advice and the guidance offered to the clients, and also influence the design of any exercise or physical activity programme including the frequency, intensity, duration and the type of activity recommended. This will optimise the benefits of exercise for the clients.

Overall, exercise pre-participation screening is an important step in promoting safe and effective physical activity. Fitness professionals are encouraged to upskill themselves through workshops such as those conducted by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and Exercise is Medicine Singapore (EIMS) to familiarise themselves with physical activity and exercise pre-participation screening and assessment, as well as exercise prescription in clinical populations.

MY CLIENT SAYS HE HAS FLAT FEET. SHOULD I RECOMMEND HIM TO GET A PAIR OF CUSTOMISED IN-SOLES?

Having flat feet is a common condition but flat feet are not necessarily considered a problem for the average person if there are no symptoms. Although having flat feet can inhibit athletic performance, many elite athletes with this condition have no problem performing at a high level and in fact many of the elite athletes have flat feet.

While it does not always require insoles or orthotics, it can be helpful for some individuals. Orthotics can help alleviate foot pain, improve foot, and leg alignment, and provide better shock absorption. However, it's always best to consult with a medical professional to determine if orthotics would be beneficial for your client.

IS SOCIAL PRESCRIPTION IMPORTANT IN THE HEALTH AND FITNESS INDUSTRY?

Social prescribing refers to the act of connecting people with non-medical resources that can help improve their overall well-being. Fitness professionals with social prescribing skills are able to help their clients find resources that go beyond physical exercise to achieve their health goals. This includes connecting them with support groups, community activities, and other resources that can support their mental and emotional health. By helping clients access these resources, fitness professionals can provide a more holistic approach to fitness and support overall wellness.





Social prescription is important in the fitness industry because it recognizes the connection between physical and mental well-being. Social interaction is crucial for maintaining good mental health, and incorporating social activities into fitness routines can be an effective way to promote mental wellness. For example, group fitness classes or team sports not only provide physical exercise, but also offer opportunities to meet new people and develop meaningful relationships.

Additionally, social prescription can promote adherence to fitness programs by providing a sense of community and accountability. By focusing on social connections as well as physical activity, social prescription can help individuals achieve comprehensive health and wellness goals.

HOW DO I PROMOTE ADHERENCE TO EXERCISE IN CHILDREN?

Make it fun: Children are more likely to stick to their exercise routine if the activity is fun and enjoyable. Try to incorporate games and activities that they enjoy, such as tag, soccer, or dancing. Include their friends to make it a social activity. Make the activity competitive for them to challenge one another.

Set achievable goals: It's important to set realistic and achievable goals that children can work towards. This will help them stay motivated and feel a sense of accomplishment when they reach their goals. Start with small goals and gradually increase the difficulty level. Praise them for every effort and consider rewarding them when appropriate.

Be a role model: Children often learn by example, so if you want them to exercise regularly, it's important to identify a role model who can lead by example. This is likely to be the parents at home. Encourage them to make exercise a part of their daily routine and involve their children in their activities. This will help them see the importance of exercise and make it a natural part of their lifestyle in the family.

HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY ELDERLY CLIENTS TO EXERCISE?

Encouraging an elderly person to exercise can sometimes be challenging, but it's important for their health and well-being. Here are a few tips on how to encourage them:

Start small: Encourage them to take a short walk around the block or do some gentle stretching exercises. Every physical movement counts, and it's important to shift the focus away from incremental exercise progression to engaging in regular physical activity and exercise.

Make it fun: Find culturally appropriate and safe activities they enjoy, such as dancing, walking in the park, cycling or swimming. Let them choose the physical activity that they would like to do, instead of deciding what is best for them.



Be supportive: Offer to exercise with them or find a workout buddy who can encourage them along the way. Engage the caregiver and make exercise a family activity.

Set goals: Help them set realistic goals and celebrate their successes along the way. Be generous with praises for every effort they have put in, celebrate every milestone no matter how small they are, and reward them when appropriate.

Make it a routine: Encourage them to make exercise a regular part of their daily routine by scheduling it at the same time each day.

Remember, the most important thing is to be patient, supportive and encouraging. With the help and guidance of fitness professionals who practise client-centred care, these elderly individuals can enjoy the benefits of regular exercise and improve their overall health and well-being!

I HAVE FEMALE CLIENTS WHO CANCEL THEIR APPOINTMENTS CITING THAT 'IT'S THE TIME OF THE MONTH'. SHOULD ONE EXERCISE DURING PERIODS?

It's generally safe to exercise during menstruation. In fact, some women find that light to moderate exercise can actually help relieve menstrual cramps and mood swings. However, it's important to advise them to listen to their body and adjust the workout routine if they are feeling fatigued or experiencing heavy bleeding. As always, if they have any concerns about exercising during their periods, it's best to check with their doctor or healthcare provider.

I HAVE AN OVERWEIGHT CLIENT WHO IS EXERCISING FOR WEIGHT LOSS. ARE PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS STILL RECOMMENDED FOR HIM?

Protein supplements may be helpful for someone who is exercising to lose weight, as protein is essential for building and repairing muscle tissue. However, it's important to note that protein supplements should be used as a supplement to a balanced diet and not as a replacement for whole foods.

These supplements also add to the daily caloric intake and therefore it's important to ensure that they are not taken in excess of the daily nutrition. It's always a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian before starting any new supplement regimen. They can help determine if protein supplements are appropriate for your client's needs and goals.

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