

## Strategies to Promote Exercise Adherence of Older Adults: A Process Model from Singapore

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### **Abstract:**

Physical exercise is known to maintain the quality of life and delay functional declines amongst older adults. However, to reap the benefits, adherence behaviours are essential. Therefore, a study was conducted in Singapore, a rapidly ageing society, to elucidate the strategies employed by older adults in sustaining their adherence in community group exercises over a specified duration.

**Method:** The study employed a constructivist grounded theory strategy within the qualitative research method. It was conceptualised within the interpretivist paradigm and adopted symbolic interactionism as its theoretical perspective. Data were gathered primarily through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. To gather diverse perspectives, perceptions, and interpretations, the study applied a maximum variation sampling strategy. Thus, the sample comprised of 30 participants from a wide age range (60 – 89 years) and socio-demographic profiles.

**Results:** The findings revealed that older adults assumed a self-agentic role, within a supportive environment across three phases: Phase One – Awakening; Phase Two – Acclimatising; Phase Three – Activating. These phases are underpinned by a scaffolded environment, of Encouraging; Nurturing; Empowering, respectively. The developed model contributes to the theoretical and empirical literature related to exercise adherence of older adults in Singapore, within an Asian context. Hitherto, this field has been dominated by studies conducted in Western countries.

**Conclusions:** The study has provided insights into older adults, and their patterns of actions and interactions in dealing with exercise adherence through their ageing process. The findings generated a systematic and process-oriented model to guide older adults in adhering to their exercise regime over time. The model could also benefit practitioners, such as exercise coaches and healthcare professionals, in facilitating older adults' exercise adherence. To date, such a temporal model and strategies, from an Asian perspective, does not appear to exist.