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Common Experiences and Beliefs Among Highly-Active, Previously-Sedentary, Middle-Aged Adults

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Purpose
Identify and analyze how motivation-al characteristics, fulfillment of psychological needs, and individual experiences/beliefs influence an individual’s motivation for physical activity (PA).

Methods
Participants (3 F, 2 M; age 36-55) were recruited using nominated sampling and public advertising. Current levels of moderate-to-high PA were determined by the International Physical Activity Questionnaire and previous-sedentarism was self-reported as a minimum of 18 months. The Self Determination Theory (SDT) was the theoretical basis for determining fulfillment of psychological needs. The Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction and Frustration Scale-General and Motives for Physical Activities Measure Revised (MPAM-R) measured general psychological satisfaction-frustration and motivational factors, respectively. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and statements were coded to identify the experiences and beliefs of the participants serving as a comparison to survey data.

“I’ve definitely increased other people’s awareness around me...all wanting to get fit and healthy, and I have certainly modeled that to my children.”
“It took me to come around again 20 years later to finally decide...to get healthy and fit.” - Rachael- Run

“I know that my general state of happiness is very much tied to my physical activity level.” - Shauna- Run, mountain bike

“...create micro habits...if you start small, what you can achieve is huge.”
“I went from being depressed when I wasn’t doing physical activity to now being at the enjoyment of my life.” - Ronica- Hike, yoga, weight lift, run

“I start to feel this sense of yearning...” - Brent- Cycle

“I focus on what I can do.”
“Any injury, that's not going to be my weak spot, that's going to be my strong spot now.”
“I try to preach...get out and do something...just go out for a walk.” - Troy- Jui Jitsu, run

Conclusion
Moderate-to-high PA was associated with greater life satisfaction than frustration across all three domains. This conclusion is supported by the survey instruments and interviews. The interviews suggest overcoming sedentarism was highly driven by autonomous decisions to improve health and well-being.