

**FROM PHYSICAL INACTIVITY TO EXERCISE
MAINTENANCE; BARRIERS AND MOTIVATIONS**

Phenomenological research on personal training participants

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ABSTRACT

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As the gap between those physically active and inactive continues to widen, one purpose for this study was to provide further understanding surrounding exercise behavior, particularly of those physically inactive. The issues at focus are perceived barriers and motivations towards exercising, in this case examined through personal- and weight training participation. In addition to previous research on the field, theories of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behavior change and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations from the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) are used to support the analysis of the participants' experiences.

This research takes a phenomenological approach. The five previously physically inactive participants were individually interviewed using semi-structured interviewing, between October and December 2017. The study analyzes a selected phase of the participants' lives, starting from physical inactivity and proceeding towards the maintenance of constant exercising. In addition to supporting the understanding of barriers and motivations to exercise, the research gives insight to the customer perspective behind personal training, on which completed research has only begun to appear during the last decade in Finland. Therefore, following the phase of their physical inactivity, the participants became long-term personal training customers.

The results successfully identified a range of both common and uncommon perceived barriers to exercise of those physically inactive. Additionally, a motivational change between the beginning of exercise and its active maintenance was identified. Commonalities were found between the participants, from their experienced barriers to exercise, motivations to begin exercise and the motivational transformation towards long-term exercise. The participants had no contact with each other and lived in differing life stages. Previous research, the understanding of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations along with the timely stages of the Transtheoretical Model supported analyzing the exercise experiences at hand.

Suggestions of future research include adapting the found barriers from this study to a larger scope of physically inactive individuals, in some cases lacking research on. It is suggested, that including the views of those who have experienced physical inactivity themselves should be taken to consideration in the promotion of physical activity and exercise. Likewise, gender differences in both barriers and motivations to exercise could be further investigated from a larger scope. Finally, the personal training industry remains to be a relatively new field of business in Finland, with a wide range of its aspects lacking research. Therefore, further studies on customer perspectives for its improvement could benefit the business in the future.

Key words: Physical inactivity, exercise, barriers, Transtheoretical Model, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, personal training, personal training customers

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following the industry surrounding health and exercise, it can be seen as an expanding field of business. Taking a glance of some figures, the Statistics Portal (2016) has estimated, that between 2009 and 2015 the total number of health and fitness clubs grew from 12 852 000 to 18 685 000 worldwide, indicating a 45% increase. Corresponding figures for the number of their members showed a 27% increase, from 119.52 million to 151.47 million. However, the growth of the health industry doesn't seem to reflect on the overall amounts of exercise practiced, as the contrasting phenomenon of physical inactivity has followed a somewhat similar expansion during the past decades, now emerging as a major concern and burden on public health worldwide.

In the current time, a significant proportion of the global population practice insufficient amounts of physical activity to maintain their overall health. As insufficient physical activity has been stated to increase the risk of death from 20% to 30%, it is recognized as one of the leading risk factors of global mortality. (WHO, 2018) In order to understand physical inactivity, a need for differing approaches has been presented, seeking detailed information on what physical inactivity truly means in daily lives and how it progresses. Likewise, an underlying weakness of previous research and physical activity enhancement has been noted as failing to capture the reality and need of those who are physically inactive. (Eskola et al., 2009) Using a phenomenological approach, this qualitative research aims to find, what barriers had the previously inactive participants experienced to participate in exercise. The intention is to circulate around general, socially safe reasoning (i.e. lack of time or high cost), at times taken advantage of to explain exercise avoidance, and ideally present new information.

Further on, the second objective of this study is to discover, how physical inactivity was transformed to long-term exercise maintenance, through personal training. As the first personal trainer (PT) educator set its foot in Finland during 1997 (FAF, 2017), research on the Finnish PT industry has only begun to appear after 2010. Research has been taken to use on Finnish PT educators (Koskinen, 2014), the sales of PT –services (Kela & Kyöstäjä, 2015), the sport of fitness (Komulainen, 2016) and official guidelines for the occupation of a PT by the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA, 2015; 2011). However, as this study takes a customer perspective to the service, international research has also been included to support this aspect (Church et al., 2010; Dail et al., 2011; Harvey & Williams, 2014).

Continuing from the previous, this study should also give some insight on how this relatively new industry of personal training has been experienced from a customer perspective on a long-term basis in Finland. Finally, between physical inactivity and exercise through personal training lies the analysis of the participants' initial motivations to begin exercise, as well as their transformation on the course towards exercise maintenance. Therefore, the aimed result is to analyze the entire experience comprehensively, starting from the point of physical inactivity, following its course towards exercise adoption through personal training.

1.1 Personal Interest

Throughout the past ten years, I have maintained a physically active lifestyle, enjoying different types of, mostly individualistic, sports. In fact, I had been employed by the gym I practiced my weight-training at some years ago, and further familiarized myself to the environment of strength- and personal training by peers surrounding. In addition to supporting my understanding of the sport, these connections opened opportunities to find the PT customers I sought for now, with matching profiles and experiences I aimed to investigate. Therefore, the understanding I had from the field was one reason to why I chose personal- and weight training to be the sport of focus in this research.

Another aspect, leading me to this subject was the ongoing discussion surrounding the increase of physical inactivity. The issue, which caught my attention was just how often very "general" reasons are brought up, as barriers to exercise. This awakened interest to discuss thoughts and perceptions of physical inactivity, with its professionals; those who have been physically inactive themselves. I hoped, that taking the time to thoroughly interview this life stage with every participant individually would uncover personal meanings for physical inactivity beneath those "general" reasons, in the best case relatable between the participants, who had no connections with each other.

Completing my master's degree in sports management and health promotion, I was able to include optional courses from sports psychology to my studies, feeding the growing interest I had for the field. From the starting point of planning this research, it was clear, that I wanted to take advantage of sports psychology. After circulating around the field I concluded to including specific elements of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) along with the effect of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, to further support my understanding of these experiences.

Therefore, I hope to have implemented a study, which brings new light on the barriers to exercise, why and how they have been overcome and what role have the personal trainers had within this experience.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of the following main sections; introduction, theoretical framework, research task, implementation of the study, results and discussion. The first part of the theory, understanding physical activity, exercise and physical inactivity, is located in the following chapter 2, in order to support the reader's understanding of the research task ahead. Here the recommendations for practiced physical activity along with previous research of physical inactivity are discussed. Following the research task, the literature proceeds to introduce personal training to the reader. The final part of the literature discusses the chosen supportive behavioral theories and their previous application on the sport and exercise setting, before proceeding to the implementation of the study.

The implementation of the study includes the used methodology of data collection and – analysis, as well as discussing the process of the data collection. In this section, criticism and limitations towards the used methodology are also taken to notice. Additionally, the participants of the study are introduced, after which the discussion of the results begins. Chapter 7.1 provides the answer for the first research question, considering the barriers of exercise participation during physical inactivity. Therefore, chapters 7.2 and 7.3 analyze the participants' motivational change towards exercise, from its beginning to active maintenance. Finally, the found results are concluded along with acknowledged limitations in the completion of this study and suggestions for future research.

2. UNDERSTANDING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EXERCISE AND PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

In advance to presenting the research task, I will clarify the meanings for physical activity, exercising and physical inactivity (or insufficient exercising), to support understanding the aims of this research. First it should be noticed, that at times the interpretations for “exercise” and “physical activity” tend to overlap each other. The World Health Organization (WHO), has defined physical activity as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure”. (WHO, 2018) In other words, any activity we do (i.e. shopping) is defined as physical activity. However, when I refer to “physical inactivity” I am not discussing the lack of any physical movements performed, rather the absence of intended exercising, leading to insufficient amounts of exercise or physical activity practiced, in order to fulfil health recommendations.

2.1 Global health recommendations for the adult population

Continuing from the definition of physical activity, exercising has been referred to as a “subcategory” of physical activity, separated by its nature of being planned, structured, repetitive and intending to improve or maintain single or multiple aspects in physical fitness and health. Additional health benefits are gained, when physical activity is completed on top of exercising. (WHO, 2018) Since all participants in this study were aged from 27 to 59 years, their recommendations (adults aged between 18-64 yrs.) for a minimum, sufficient, amount of physical activity practiced on a weekly basis would be the following.

1. 150 minutes of moderate-intensity (i.e. hiking) or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity (i.e. running) exercise/physical activity. Corresponding combinations of these two can be completed to meet the recommendation.
2. To gain additional health benefits, moderate-intensity physical activity/exercising should be increased to a weekly amount of 300 minutes or a corresponding increase of vigorous-intensity exercise/physical activity completed.
3. Muscle-strengthening activities should be practiced, during two days (minimum), involving the major muscle groups (i.e. legs, chest, back). (Alfredsson et al., 2016; Mäki-Opas, 2016; WHO, 2018).

Despite the recommendations and health benefits gained from physical activity and exercising being common and clear, the lack of their practice has evolved to being a major concern in public health. As an example, few outcomes caused by insufficient amounts of physical activity/exercising have been noticed as decreased working ability, poor physical functioning, and chronic diseases, in addition to physical inactivity being recognized as the fourth leading risk factor on global mortality. (Aaltonen et al., 2014; Borodulin et al., 2016; WHO, 2018) In the following chapter, I will examine some research dedicated on the issues of physical inactivity experienced in Finland.

2.2 Previously recognized barriers for physical activity in the adult population

Proceeding to discuss previous research dedicated to physical inactivity in Finland, Borodulin et al., (2016) completed a study analyzing barriers for leisure-time physical activity (LTPA), while focusing on socio-demographic and behavioral determinants in the adult population. Several common barriers for leisure-time LTPA were raised from previous studies as the absence of time, motivation or social support, environmental issues, health-related obstacles, a physically active working environment or other challenges more frequently noticed in lower socio-economic groups, such as low self-efficacy or the accessibility of sports facilities.

The impact which socio-economic groups have on health-related inequalities have been further supported. Higher education, profession and income are related with more LTPA. Socio-economic inequalities seen in the overall physical activity levels of the Finnish population have increased during the past 11 years. Causes behind these differences have been recognized to generate from significant and widely varying psychological, biological, social, environmental and political issues. (Eskola et al. 2009; Kauravaara, 2013; Mäki-Opas, 2016) In this sense, socio-economic differences are relevant to understand, yet a wide independent subject of its own. Contrastingly, this study aims to answer the research questions, by finding commonalities between the participants, situated in differing life stages and -situations.

Returning to the study completed by Borodulin et al. (2016), here 5980 participants (25-64 yrs.) responded to their experienced LTPA levels, of which 3301 (55%) recognized their practiced amounts as insufficient. Following the presented order, four major barriers to LTPA

resulted as lack of time, motivation, company to exercise with and high cost. Correspondingly, Alfredsson et al. (2016) aimed to find health-related and demographic correlates for leisure time inactivity in a general Scandinavian population (18-70 yrs.). Lower education, lacking sports history, higher alcohol consumption, smoking, overweight, having children, lack of social support and unemployment resulted to an increased prevalence of leisure-time inactivity. Overall, from the Swedish group of participants (n=5734) 42% were categorized as being physically inactive during their leisure time. This categorization was based on their self-reports of having a sedentary or moderately active lifestyle, however not exercising, during the course of one year.

2.3 Suggested commonalities between the physically inactive

Another approach used to study physical inactivity in Finland has been to find common characteristics between those inactive. Illustrating the previous, Eskola et al. (2009) aimed to create categories including young inactive adults (aged from 15 to 38 yrs.). From 3245 respondents, 1163 (37%), were categorized as “physically inactive”. In this study, the minimum health recommendations used were practicing 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity five times per week or 20 minutes of high-intensity physical activity three times a week, including active transits. As a result, seven segments from half of the inactive participants were created (table 1).

Table 1. Segments for physically inactive young adults (Eskola et al., 2009, 29-33)

Name	Size	Characteristics
Settled women	14%	Working aged with family, some illnesses & interested in health.
Young female students	12%	Under 34 yrs., healthy habits (i.e. diet) & interest in health.
Young men	9%	Single, mean age 23 yrs. not yet interested in their health.
Courier and family, both genders	4%	Working aged with family, non-smokers, higher alcohol use, healthier diets, less obesity & stress.
Risk of marginalization, men	4%	Physical working environment, relationship, smokers, high alcohol use & absence from work, unhealthy diet, less obesity, some sickness (i.e. stress & pain), not interested in health.
Marginalized men	2%	Smokers, high alcohol use, unhealthy diets, higher obesity & sicknesses often restricting employment, not interested in health.
Lost health	1%	Non-smokers, unhealthy diets, frequent physical & psychological illness, not physically fit.

The intention behind the research by Eskola et al. (2009), was to create segments, which would be applicable to the general population of Finland. It was suggested, that understanding the characteristics of physically inactive groups would support creating matching interventions to promote their physical activity. It was also addressed, that physical inactivity experienced in the young adults of Finland may simply relate to their lifestyle and culture. Kauravaara (2013), introduced similar aspects in her research on the lifestyle habits of young Finnish men (18-20 yrs.). It was suggested, that lacking interest towards physical activity can reflect on the will to indulge free time without obligations and goals set by others. Therefore, being physically inactive can also feel like a “natural and sensible” way of life in some social environments. Within this age group, the emphasis of friends was extremely high; a slight (yet unlikely) possibility of practicing physical activity, i.e. skateboarding, together was apparent, as long as it was free-willed, lacked rules and could be ended at any time. It was found, that health didn’t motivate the group in question, which rather found their enjoyment through other life habits.

In the course of their discussion, Eskola et al. (2009) expressed a need for research seeking more detailed meaning for what it is to be physically inactive. Additionally, a need for social and socio-psychological research was addressed to understanding physical inactivity and its social development (i.e. social roles), among other matters. This is an area, which my research

takes some perspective on. Using a qualitative approach, the answers handling physical inactivity aren't restricted, rather encouraged to discuss by the previously inactive participants. However, as physical inactivity itself isn't the only issue I'm researching, the limitations regarding its depth certainly leave room for more detailed analysis in the future.

3. RESEARCH TASK

In this chapter, I will first present the aim and purpose of this research; basically, the main issues I have intended to investigate, along with the planned theory used to support their understanding. Following, the research questions are introduced, used to fulfil the aim of the research. From this point onwards the study will continue its literature review, introducing personal training to the reader, after which the supportive behavioral theories are discussed.

3.1 Aims and purpose of the research

As discussed (chapter 2), the ongoing growth of physical inactivity has become an issue of wide concern in public health. The participants whom I have included to this qualitative study all share a common history of experiencing physical inactivity from under one year to their entire lives, before a turning point was met. Using a combination of supportive theory from previous research surrounding the exercise setting and sports psychology, I aim to provide fresh information on the barriers for exercise participation, using the views of those previously physically inactive. Therefore, the main resources of information are the participants' own perspectives received from their individual semi-structured interviews, leaving the role of the theory to understanding these perspectives comprehensively.

However, the intention of this study doesn't remain at analyzing a single phase of physical inactivity. The common history of the participants continue to beginning exercise by hiring a personal trainer (PT) and proceeding to long-term exercise maintenance with the help of personal training. Therefore, the following issues under analysis are, what motivated the participants to begin exercising and how did these motivations transform from the starting point of their training, to when it had been maintained long-term (from one to two years). For the reason, that this study is dedicated to understand elements within a process of behavior change, the Transtheoretical Model and extrinsic and intrinsic motivations from the Self-Determination Theory are used as supportive behavioral theory (chapter 5).

3.2 The research questions

In order to fulfil the aim of this study, the following are set as its research questions:

1. What were the experienced barriers to exercise during the time of physical inactivity?
2. What were the initial reasons and motivations to begin exercise with the support of personal training, and how did they transform by long-term maintenance?

Like mentioned in chapter 1, a need for more research surrounding the PT -industry in Finland is timely. However, for the limitations set on the wideness of a master's thesis, I am unable to comprehensively grasp this industry. Therefore, the research questions will concentrate on the experiences of changing exercise behavior. However, I find that this approach also provides useful information on the needs of previously physically inactive customers for their PTs. Therefore, the literature review will continue to introduce personal training to the reader as the exercise of focus, before presenting the behavioral theory taken to use.

4. INTRODUCING PERSONAL TRAINING

As personal training belongs to the industry of fitness, it is the first issue briefly discussed. Following, the role and occupation of a personal trainer (PT) are introduced. Finally, several aspects of the PT-educators located in Finland are included. It is worth noticing, that previous research surrounding PT customers are further presented in the results section (chapters 7.1 and 7.2). The reason for this being, that comparing issues raised in various research (i.e. motivations to begin personal training) with this study, provides a more comprehensive discussion to reflect on the results, while avoiding their repetition. Therefore, this section mainly supports the readers understanding on what is meant by personal training and the profession of a PT.

4.1 The industry of fitness

The practice of “fitness”, refers to an often individualistic lifestyle, following guidelines regarding ongoing weight training, additional exercise routines and nutrition. The surrounding industry began developing during the 1970’s from USA. This development was seen in the industries of nutrition, exercise equipment and health clubs. During the following decades, pursuing “fitness” gained mass popularity and spread rapidly worldwide, developing to be a multi-billion dollar/euro industry. (Maguire, 2001) Several reasons behind the experienced mass popularity of “fitness” are suggested to originate from societies’ overall acceptance and support towards an active and health-enhancing lifestyle, body marking social status and the growth of individualism (Andreasson & Johansson, 2016; Church et al., 2010).

In many cases people may not obtain previous experience from weight and –fitness training, in which case personal training is introduced to the concept. The purpose of a PT is to educate, motivate, plan and coach their client to gain the best results from their programs for training and nutrition. Therefore, PTs can be defined as present-day “coaches” of weight training and nutrition available for everyone. The occupation and role of a PT are discussed with more detail in the following chapter.

4.2 The role and occupation of a personal trainer

Progressing from the discussed purpose of a personal trainer, following is an official occupational description set by the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA, 2011) for the profession.

“A personal trainer’s role includes designing, implementing and evaluating exercise or physical activity programs for a range of individual clients by collecting and analyzing client information to ensure the effectiveness of personal exercise programs. A personal trainer should also actively encourage potential clients or members to participate in and adhere to regular exercise or physical activity programs, employing appropriate motivational strategies to achieve this.” (EHFA, 2011, 12)

While professional competence is without a doubt vital for providing successful training, the emphasis of emotional labor cannot be ignored in the role of a PT. Harvey, Vachhani and Williams (2014) published an article based on ethnographic data, supported by participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, collected between 2009 and 2011. The participants included 20 PTs from two fitness centers located in South Wales, UK. When questioned about their role and keys to achieve professional success, PTs considered expertise, knowledge and emotional labor important. In some occasions, owning strong ‘people skills’ were highlighted by PTs as more important for business success than completing efficient training, as demonstrated in the following statements by the participants in question.

“You need to talk to people, to get to know them. You have to show interest in them. The personality is very important. They always say that people don’t buy the product, they buy the person.” (Harvey, Vachhani & Williams, 2014, 463)

“Obviously, if you’re a good PT then you get referrals, but if you’ve got a good personality and you’re approachable and you’re good at approaching people then you’ll get business. A very good PT with all the qualifications and no social skills will struggle ... Rather than just training someone for the hour, it’s more about having a chat to them, finding out about their life, showing them that they can come and talk to you. That’s the big thing, I think.” (Harvey, Vachhani & Williams, 2014, 463)

The strong emphasis on the social role of a PT isn't limited to the trainers' viewpoints, but is supported by research focused on their customers. According to Church et al. (2010), in the

case of individuals not being in shape or experiencing intimidation or uncertainty towards fitness facilities, PTs can provide the emotional comfort needed to begin the training practice. This study included eight female clients (24 to 54 yrs.) and focused on the effect of the PT-client relationship to the quality of their exercising. Positive experience (i.e. enjoyable, fun and meaningful) was emphasized by all participants. Relationships (experiencing friendship and relatedness with their PT, networking and gaining recognition) were a valued outcome. Valued qualities for a trainer were professionalism, social characteristics (i.e. outgoing) and gender (women preferring female trainers). Fun, varying training toward effort maximization experienced as unreachable alone was expected, as well as encouragement and accountability to train.

Correspondingly, Dail et al. (2011) have recognized reasons for PT purchase as frustration of physical “failure”, required help to sustain motivation in physical activity, emotional support and training guidelines. The social role hasn’t been left unnoticed by EHFA either. In their overall framework, communication skills and psycho-social aspects (i.e. psychological aspects on social support and behavior modification) are recognized as important to obtain in the profession. (EHFA, 2011) As the professional occupation and “role” of a PT seem to proceed hand in hand, these social elements can be seen as an expectation for practicing the profession.

When analyzing the profession of personal training, awareness shouldn’t be forgotten. Overall, this (rather new) occupation generally remains without legally set requirements in the majority of countries, including Finland, for its practice (Koskinen, 2014). This concludes to the fact that anyone is still free to define themselves as a “personal trainer”. Therefore, one perspective worth keeping in mind is, that researching the background and qualifications of the PT would still remain the customers’ responsibility, until legal requirements for the occupation are set.

4.3 Provided education for Personal Trainers in Finland

The opportunity to accomplish a personal training -education in Finland became available in 1997. During this time FAF (Fitness Academy of Finland) was the first company to begin arranging PT- courses. (FAF, 2017) From this point onwards, the concept has spread, developed and set its place within the Finnish sport and health industry. Since the practice of

a PT profession still remains without legal requirements, as already mentioned, evaluating the exact amount of existing PT educators and PTs is challenging in Finland, without an official registry.

During 2014, the amount of institutions providing PT - education in Finland was evaluated as the following. Overall, 25 educators were recognized from three main providers; sport training centers (11), companies (7), adult education centers (2) and masseuse educators (4). Additionally, it was estimated that during 2013, 1250 personal trainers graduated from these institutions. The hourly amount used for contact lessons for the education of PTs shifted between 64 and 243 per company. Added on to the contact lessons, independent work was required, evaluated to range widely from 32 to 567 hours per educator. It has been noted, that PTs, their customers and employers would all benefit from coherent guidelines and requirements considering the entire industry. (Koskinen, 2014) In my opinion, these guidelines would protect customers by offering them a secured level of expertise, as well as relieve the positions of PTs and their employers by confining what the job description for a PT is and what should or shouldn't be required from its fulfillment.

In general, PT educators situated in Finland should be expected to follow the standards which the European Health & Fitness Association (EHFA) has set for the content of their provided education. Working in co-operation with the European Commission, the EHFA provides a regulatory framework for the activity and development of the health and fitness industry in Europe. (EHFA Standards, 2015) In order to meet the requirements assigned for a PT, the education should cover functional anatomy, physiology, nutrition, psycho-social aspects of health and fitness, health and fitness assessment, training adaptation, exercise planning and -programming. (EHFA, 2011) When a personal trainer has completed education fulfilling these requirements they can be registered to the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS). This register is one example of how customers' can ensure their PTs' competence in the field of exercise and health.

5. SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORAL THEORIES

Serving the purpose to support understanding and identifying essential elements in the participants' experiences, I have taken to use selected subjects from two behavioral theories. Worth attention is, that my aim isn't to let either of the used theories take a dominant role in this research, being an "absolute truth" to reflect the lived experiences on. Rather, the experiences of the participants' are my leading source of information, and both theories are used to deepen the understanding of the issues, which these experiences may or may not withhold. Therefore, in this chapter I will present the Transtheoretical Model of behavior change, after which the separation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations is discussed, explained within the Self-Determination theory.

5.1 The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behavior change

The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) was initially developed by James O. Prochaska (University of Rhode Island) and Carlo C. DiClemente (Texas Research Institute of Mental Sciences), from 1977. During this time, the TTM was still referred to as "Transtheoretical therapy", in which form the model was constructed by four variables; preconditions for therapy, process of change, content to be changed and therapeutic relationship. Transtheoretical therapy provided support to follow the progress of therapeutic treatment in patients. (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982) However, the form of the TTM differs significantly from this, "first", version. Therefore, the model for Transtheoretical therapy shouldn't be analyzed too deeply for its irrelevance to this study; rather being acknowledged as the "ancestor" of the TTM.

The Transtheoretical model attempts to evaluate the process of changing behavior, generally towards achieving a set goal or state of being. This progress begins from the stage of one not acknowledging a need for change (precontemplation) and carries on through to when a new behavior is successfully adopted and maintained for over six months (maintenance). The first applications for the model focused on analyzing changes in addictive behavior, for instance attempts to quit smoking. (Grim et al., 2016; Dishman et al., 2011) Since this time, research has proceeded to applying the model for different uses, such as the adoption of physical

activity (chapter 5.1.1). The TTM is built by five “core” stages, within which one is assumed to progress or relapse between, during their behavioral transformation (Table 2).

Table 2. Stages of Change (Grim et al., 2016; Disman et al., 2011)

Stage of Change	Intention Towards a Behavior
Precontemplation	Not intending to change a behavior.
Contemplation	Intending to change behavior within six months.
Preparation	Behavioral change is decided or being currently attempted.
Action	New behavior has been maintained for under six months.
Maintenance	The maintenance of the behavior has continued for over six months.

Worth noticing is, that each stage is placed accordingly inside a set time frame. This element of time separates the TTM from most other health-related behavioral models. (Grim et al., 2016) This timely element is additionally one of the reasons for which the TTM is included in this particular research; it is assumed, that the participants would have shifted between these five stages, while progressing from physical inactivity to long-term exercise maintenance. This in mind, I have taken the timely stages to use in the course of planning the interview base for the data collection of this study (chapter 6.2.1).

During the course of time and the progression of research, the “core” stages of the TTM have faced modifications, applications and expansion. In some cases, a sixth stage, “termination”, has been added to the model. However, the stage of termination remains to receive far less attention in completed research. The criteria of achieving termination has been suggested as nonexistent temptation for relapsing. Basically implying, that the new behavior has become somewhat “automatic” and that one has absolute confidence in its ongoing practice for the future. (Evers, Prochaska & Redding, 2015) Relevant is, that the duration of the maintenance stage has been estimated to continue from six months to under five years (Grim et al., 2016). Therefore, I would assume the stage of termination to continue from this point onwards. The previous criteria is the reason for which I haven’t included the termination stage in this research; it hasn’t been fulfilled by the participants exercise history at the time of data collection (chapter 6.5).

5.1.1 The constructs of the TTM

The main components related to an individual's progression through or between the timely stages of the TTM, are briefly explained in this chapter. Following, the hypothesized relationship between these components are shown in Figure 1.

Self-efficacy refers to the confidence of one's ability to reach a set goal or perform an activity, without giving in to temptation or assuming to being incapable of its performance (Evers et al., 2015). In the TTM, self-efficacy is expected to increase alongside stage progression; being the lowest during precontemplation and peaking in maintenance (Dishman et al., 2011). The recognition of the importance, which self-efficacy has in human behavior isn't limited to the TTM, but has been referred to in the field of sports psychology in general. For example, it is assumed that self-efficacy strongly supports maintaining high intentions towards a practiced behavior, therefore easing the management of setbacks or challenges against it. Likewise, self-efficacy has been recognized as a key factor to adopting multiple behaviors as itself. (Biddle & Mutrie, 2008) Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the role of self-efficacy would gain some recognition in the participants' experiences under analysis.

Temptations are meant by "negative urges" supporting individual reasoning of why not to attempt behavioral change or return to a familiar behavior. Hypothetically, the increase of temptations would lead to a decrease of self-efficacy. For this reason, the experienced temptations are expected to transform in reverse with self-efficacy; as self-efficacy increases, temptations should decrease. (Dishman et al., 2011). Triggers for awakened temptations have been suggested as for instance, negative disturbances or emotional distress, craving and positive social settings (Evers et al., 2015).

Decisional balance is an individual evaluation of the potential benefits (pros) and costs (cons), resulting from a practiced behavior and changing it. Assumably, the pros increase and cons decrease, while progressing through the stages of change. (Dishman et al., 2011) For example, when beginning exercise, one might limit its potential benefits to weight-loss while noticing several costs (time and price). As the exercising continues, further benefits should (according to the TTM) be discovered (feeling energized, new social contacts and increasing strength), while the costs are no longer considered to limit the new behavior. This in mind, the relationship between pros and cons correspond to the one between self-efficacy and temptations.

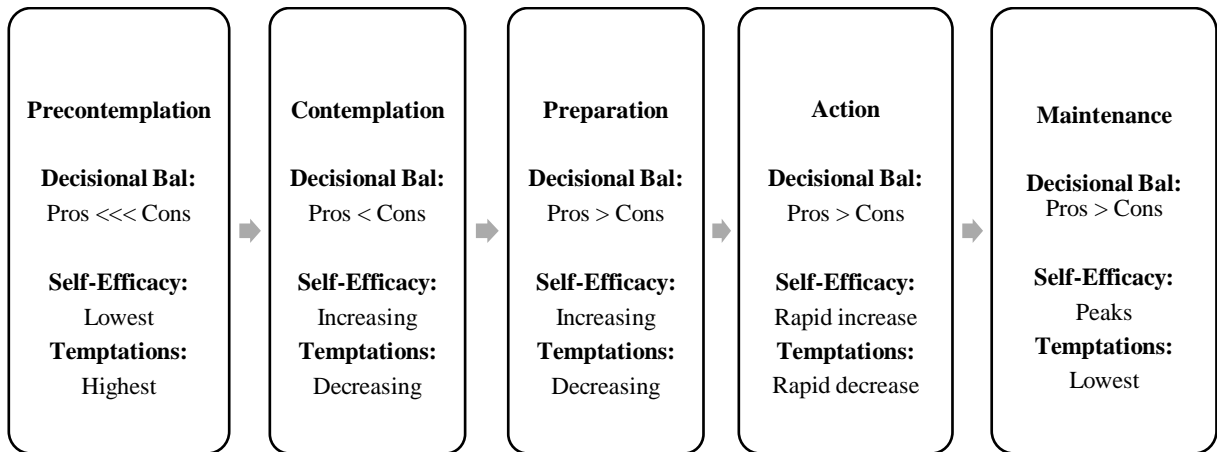


Figure 1. The relationships between the components of the TTM (Dishman et al., 2011., 9)

Finally, while the estimated timely occurrence of change (when), is presented by the discussed stages, an aspect of the process of change is also included in the TTM. This process supports understanding how the change can be experienced, and is generally described through separate individual processes. These processes are categorized to being either experiential or behavioral. Experiential processes are based on personal (inner) experiences, while behavioral processes are enforced by the environment and action. (Dishman et al., 2011; Evers et al., 2015) However, I have chosen to exclude analyzing the individual processes from this research, simply for its limitations. As my intention is to include elements from the Self-Determination theory (SDT) as well (chapter 5.2), a need to finding a balance, between which elements are the most supportive to answer my research questions (chapter 3.2) from the two theories, exists.

5.1.2 Research in applying the TTM to physical activity and health behavior

Despite its original use to support understanding the change from addiction, the TTM has received growing attention on its applicability to understanding and predicting health- and physical activity behavior (Blissmer et al., 2015; Dishman et al., 2011; Cardinal., 1997; Evers et al., 2015). This chapter will briefly discuss several viewpoints from applying the TTM to the health and exercise setting, before moving on to presenting the Self-Determination theory.

The first issue regarding the application of the TTM on physical activity is, rather naturally, attention given for its original development to support ending, not adopting, a behavior. Therefore, its components direct usability in predicting physical activity behavior shouldn't be taken for granted. For instance, it has been suggested, that the assumed relationship

between the TTM constructs and health behavior should be examined for longer time periods (i.e. over one year), to support their understanding. (Dishman et al., 2011) In my opinion, criticism given to shifting a behavioral model out of its original to somewhat reversed use is expected. On the other hand, this application has received significant support from various research (Blissmer et al., 2015; Dishman et al., 2011; Cardinal., 1997; Evers et al., 2015; Kerry et al., 2008). Therefore, it can be seen as a promising approach to take advantage of an efficient behavioral model and further develop it towards application of higher diversity.

In the case of using the TTM to predict health behavior on an individual level, a need for a framework consisting higher complexity has been established. The TTM itself has been suggested to provide a basic understanding of individual change. (Blissmer et. al., 2015; Evers et. al., 2015; Dishman et al., 2011) For example, it has been noted, that physical activity interventions could give higher focus on the differing needs of individuals situated in the separate timely stages (Grim et al., 2016). Likewise Dishman et al., (2011), suggested an alternative for the categorization of set timely stages, rather focusing on the psychological elements of the model, and treating behavior change as one ongoing process. I would conclude, that the interest given to differing ways of applying or developing the TTM supports the strength of its basic construction. As research proceeds to develop, it is clear that suggestions of improvement continue to be given. However, the TTM consists of relevant aspects to take in notice for behavior change, and their seen potential to be modified and diversified for further development and specified usage is nothing but a positive issue.

In regards to this research, the TTM constructs have provided relevant ideas, on what to focus on in its entity. Additionally, I have found, that the selected components can be effectively taken to advantage along with the understanding of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (chapter 5.2.1), as well as aspects referred to in sports psychology (i.e. self-efficacy). Giving an example on the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, it is assumed that the experienced “pros” of exercising can be categorized to these motivational types. Therefore, the data analysis of this study isn’t limited on calculating the numerical amount of “pros” in the selected stages of change, but also understands their transforming nature (fulfilling the need of higher complexity previously discussed). Finally, the time frame, which the original TTM is built upon suits the duration of the participants’ experiences under analysis.

5.2 The Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theory used to analyze human behavior, motivation and personality development. The SDT was initially developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, from 1985. According to the SDT, three basic psychological needs exist for general wellbeing and motivation. These are the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Briefly presented, the need for autonomy refers to ones' perception of being responsible- a "source", of completed behavior, competence to satisfaction towards ones' ability to perform a behavior. Thirdly, the sense of belonging within a community or with other individuals is meant by relatedness. (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Li et al., 2017; Uutela, 2016)

At times, the SDT's understanding of motivation has been described as continuum, at one end unwillingness to act (amotivation), extrinsic motivation in the center and intrinsic motivation at the opposite end (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Li et al., 2017). The motivational types of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are the elements I am focusing on in this study; their existence and transformation throughout the participants' experienced stages of change, from contemplation to maintenance. Therefore, the following chapters will open the mentioned for the reader.

5.2.1 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations

The relevance of the SDT for this research is supporting analyzing the process of how its participants became motivated to practice long-term exercise. The SDT categorizes various motivations based on the characteristics of their presumed goals. A general separation is made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation refers to performing something for personal interest, values, enjoyment and/or experience; to satisfy the "self". In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by outer factors, which separate the participant from the activity itself, for example performing to meet an outer demand. (Deci & Ryan, 2000) In the later mentioned, it can be suggested that the success of the activity is not measured by itself. For instance, if somebody trains at a gym in order to gain the acceptance of somebody else, they would likely measure the success of their training by whether the chosen person has accepted them or not, instead of their individual achievement in the training practiced.

It should be noticed, that the division between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations must not be mistaken as this simple. The SDT presents a continuum in which three "sub categories" of

extrinsic motivation proceed from being “highly controlled” (the most extrinsic motivation type) towards the more spontaneous, intrinsic motivation. (Blanchard et al., 2003) The motivational types are presented in Table 3, along with examples related to exercise behavior.

Table 3. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations attached with exercise behavior (Blanchard et al., 2003; Deci & Ryan, 2000)

Motivational “Sub Type”	Given Meaning
External regulation (extrinsic)	Exercising in response to an outer demand i.e. health regulations or outer rewards; least autonomous motivational type.
Introjected regulation (extrinsic)	Exercising to avoid negative feelings (i.e. guilt) or to achieve ego-enhancement/pride.
Identified regulation (extrinsic)	Exercising, because the gained benefits are personally valued. However, the activity itself isn’t pleasurable, for which reason it is still categorized as an extrinsic motivation.
Integrated regulation (extrinsic)	The benefits gained from identified regulation are fully connected and valued by the self.
Intrinsic regulation	Exercising, because the activity itself provides enjoyment, satisfaction or is genuinely interesting for the participant.

At times the separation of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be challenging, since they may share similar characteristics. One example from the previous being, that exercising to gain highly personally valued benefits, is still categorized as extrinsic motivation, yet includes the most intrinsic characteristics out of the three subtypes. (Deci & Ryan, 2000) Basically, these gained benefits are categorized as outer (extrinsic) elements, as long as the activity itself doesn’t provide inherent pleasure for the performer. Blanchard et al., (2003) have suggested, that self-determination to complete an activity increases in parallel with intrinsic motivation. For clarification, self-determination is meant by actions taken out of personal interest and meaning, not affected by outer elements.

In contrast Deci and Ryan (2000), have noted that extrinsically motivated behavior can be self-determined as well, when its given benefits are personally valued. It has been discussed, that people act upon both different amounts and types of motivation. In other words, the same reasoning for action doesn’t apply for everyone. (Deci & Ryan, 2000) This study will bring out the roles of the two motivational types, in whether the participants were extrinsically or

intrinsically motivated to begin their exercise. Following, it will be discussed, if these motivations transformed during the course to becoming exercise maintainers. The motivational subtypes are supportive to provide a full understanding of the definitions for extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, therefore not being discussed with more detail in the results.

5.2.2 Research in applying the SDT to an exercise setting

Similar to the case of the Transtheoretical model, the Self-Determination theory has received attention in the field of health promotion, supporting analysis on motivation to exercise (Blanchard et al., 2003.; Carraça et al., 2012.; Lens et al., 2007). One reason for the increasing attention set on determinants for physical activity and exercise is the growing amount of health risks generating from physical inactivity (chapter 2). To support the understanding of promoting exercise behavior and the psychological issues behind it, a need for more theoretical –based approaches has been established, to which both SDT and TTM have been seen as potential solutions. (Blanchard et al., 2003.; Cardinal, 1997) This chapter will briefly demonstrate, how the SDT has been applied to the exercise setting, focusing on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), behavior based on either extrinsic or intrinsic motivation should differ in terms of experience, quality of performance and outcome. Demonstrating this statement is a study executed by Lens et al. (2007), on PE students (17-18 yrs. and 11-12 yrs.), evaluating what impact intrinsic versus extrinsic goal framing had on taught physical activity for these two groups. The focus groups were separated to intrinsic-, extrinsic- and no goal control conditions, while being taught a set of new activities. Following, the students' PE teacher (unaware of the study) graded the outcome of the taught activities. Results showed, that intrinsic goal framing led to the highest increase of both performance and persistence in exercise behavior over short-term (i.e. one-week) and long-term (i.e. 4 months) periods. Nonetheless, the negative impact of extrinsic goal framing was suggested to being limited on theoretical or deep-level learning, therefore not necessarily taking an impact on a shallow learning process.

Intrinsically motivated behavior has been suggested to predict the highest amount of positive consequences related to task persistence and psychological well-being. However, it isn't

realistic that all exercise participants exercise for the sake of purely enjoying the activity itself. In many cases, exercising is a result of wanting to reach its benefits. Nonetheless, a link between regular exercisers and higher amounts of self-determined reasoning, as well as growing interest in exercising, has become apparent. (Blanchard et al., 2003; Carraça et al., 2012) Both of the mentioned are present in the results of a systematic review, containing 66 studies (of which 53 applied the SDT to exercise behavior), from peer-reviewed journals, discussed as the following.

Presented by Carraça et al. (2012), both identified and introjected regulation (chapter 5.2.1) were positively associated with exercising from 62% to 85% of the data received, depending on the method of analysis. Likewise, intrinsic motivation was connected with exercise behavior in the case of 62% to 92% of the data. Additionally, studies including the stages of change from the TTM resulted to individuals obtaining higher levels of self-determination to exercise in the later stages, compared to the earlier ones. (Carraça et al., 2012). While the discussed systematic review supports the connection between increasing self-determination and exercise maintenance, no clear result was found to which single motivational type would be the best predictor of exercise participation. One reason for this was the assumed gender differences in motivating factors. However, supportive to this research, the SDT was concluded to being a useful theory to improve the understanding of what motivates people to exercise.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

My aim of understanding personal experiences with depth, through the participants' introduced meanings is one reason, why I chose qualitative methodology as best suited for this research. While beginning the implementation of this study, I was unaware of the matters which had led the participants' to becoming physically inactive, and again, stepping out of that categorization towards successfully internalizing long-term exercising habits as a part of their present lives. The influencers were expected to come across as matters not measurable in a numerical form (for example past experiences, perceptions, other details).

For this reason, quantitative methodology wasn't an option I had considered at any time. Noted by Ezzy and Liamputtong (2005), in qualitative research the questions holding the most influence or significance may just become recognizable during the course of data collection. This was relatable for me, not having personal experience from physical inactivity, or being acquainted with the participants prior the data collection. From my perspective, the professionals of the phenomenon I intended to investigate were these individuals, who had lived it through themselves. Therefore, by taking the phenomenological approach introduced in this chapter, the participants were offered enough time and space to present their experiences and opinions for the subjects at hand.

6.1 Conducting qualitative interviews

In my mind, a neutral situation lacking outer distractions, offering a chance to discuss the essential elements for this research with time was what I needed, for retrieving the data I sought. Therefore, I wanted to implement the data collection by qualitative interviewing, of which relevant, general, aspects are presented in this chapter. Following, my exact data collection method of semi-structured interviewing is discussed in chapter 6.2. Despite being the most popular method to collect qualitative data within the field of sports science, interviewing mustn't be taken for granted as simple or easy to design, potentially setting a base for poor research (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). This is something I noticed to be especially true, right from the beginning of constructing my interview base (chapter 6.2.1), designing interviews reflecting used theory, while encouraging the participants to spontaneously present their meaning on my themes, without being biased.

The purpose of a qualitative interview is to encourage participants in telling their stories and describing their perspectives, insights, emotions, feelings and/or behaviors, responding to the presented questions (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Supported by Galletta (2012), while a clear and precise interview may provide confidence and accuracy, expanding on the participant's personal perspectives will lead the interview beneath its literal surface, to their meaning of the experience. The participant's responses must be captured as they are intended, not overly analyzing, for instance, their suitability for the required data during that specific situation. Openness from the interviewee may reveal new perspectives, introducing unanticipated answers, meanings and further questions to use in the study. For this reason, the interviewee's focus should be set on the participant's unfolding narrative. Acknowledging the previous aspects gave me courage to expand and deepen the meanings offered or hinted to me by each participant by probing. This was helpful in supporting the comprehensiveness of the retrieved data for its analysis.

During the course of considering my options for the interviewing method, I noticed in-depth interviews withholding many similar characteristics, on what I was planning to accomplish. Written by Ezzy and Liamputtong (2005), in-depth interviews are suited to provide a deep understanding of a set time frame from someone's life. When comparing in-depth interviews to structured methods, they can be more relatable to conversations. Naturally, this reflects on the role of the interviewee as being involved and encouraging rather than distanced from the situation; the reciprocity influences the gathered results. The used questions are preferred as open-ended, intended to encourage discussion. (Ezzy & Liamputtong, 2005) However, referring to my data collection as in-depth interviews may cause misunderstandings, regarding the length and depth of each interview. In addition, planning to take use of the themes from the TTM and SDT required a more structured base. Therefore, I ended up on semi-structured interviewing, discussed in the following chapter.

6.2 The methodology of semi-structured interviews

Despite making the decision of taking semi-structured interviewing to use, I also understood, that descriptions for any qualitative interview structure (unstructured, semi-structured or structured) cannot be judged too literally. Noted by Brinkmann (2013), in reality neither an entirely structured nor unstructured interview exists. The reason being, that participants will

talk or react unexpectedly pre-, during- or after structured interviewing in a way which differs from its constructed framework. Likewise, in an “entirely unstructured” interview the interviewee still knows which subject is going to be discussed and acts upon this. For these practicalities, Brinkmann (2013) rather describes the various structures as a continuum, from relatively structured to relatively unstructured interviewing, between which semi-structured interviewing is located at.

The reasons, for which I related my research with semi-structured interviewing were, that firstly I wasn't arranging a free discussion nor limiting the participants' narratives by strict framework or close-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews are structured accordingly to the interviewee's purpose for gaining knowledge on the selected subjects and their descriptions (Brinkmann, 2013). Further inquiry, even guesswork and spontaneity, are often necessary to reach opening the full meaning of the experience under analysis (Galletta, 2012). Therefore, the methodology of semi-structured interviewing fit my intentions of constructing an interview base, dedicated to analyze the chosen experience, its time phases and themes, while leaving space for the participants to expand the issues discussed; ideally presenting me new meanings for this research.

6.2.1 The structure of the interview base and interview themes

The aim for my data collection was to plan an interview taking advantage of the used theory, previous research and the distinctive features presented by each participant. In order to support the memorization of the discussed events I chose to begin the interview from the present moment and proceed towards the past. Correspondingly, I felt that handling each timely stage from general to specified questioning was the best approach to open each experience at hand (appendix 2 & 3).

The timely stages previously referred to are the ones' belonging to the Transtheoretical model of behavior change (chapter 5.1). Worth noticing here is, that this approach takes the TTM out of its more general use, to reversely analyzing past experiences (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982; Evers et al., 2015). Therefore, the questions were grouped to analyze the present (maintenance), action (first six months of the PT -practice), contemplation and preparation combined as a single stage (intending to start and starting the training), precontemplation (phase of physical inactivity), and finally an overview of the entire experience (Figure 2),

following this order. The combination of the contemplation and preparation stages was implemented for the following practicalities. Firstly, I expected the duration of the held interviews for each participant to exceed an hour with these five stages. Secondly, I felt that matters concerning the intention towards and beginning of personal training could be covered in one discussion, whereas the surrounding stages were spread further apart in time, requiring separate focus.

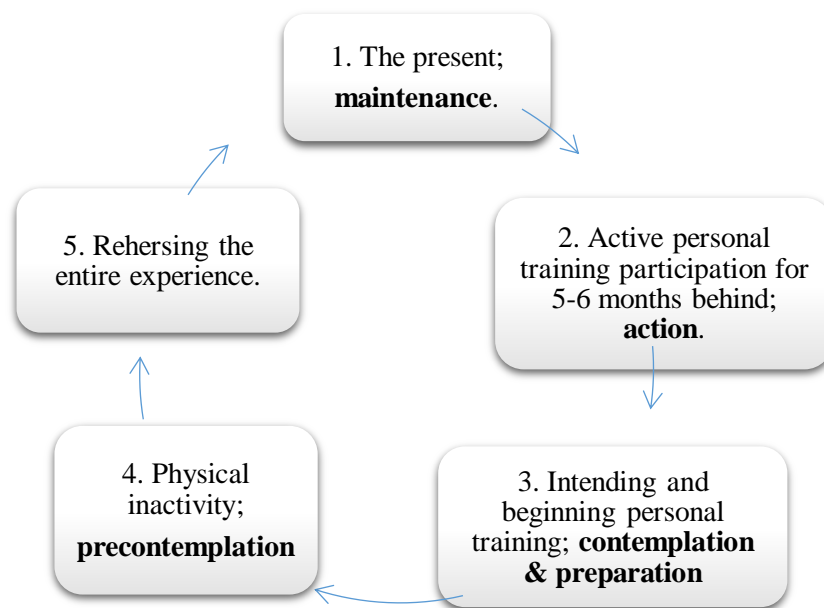


Figure 2. The interviewing process

I felt this to be the best approach for creating a discussion with depth, particularly regarding the phase of physical inactivity, expected to withhold sensitive subjects. Supported by Galletta (2012), focusing on the participant's unfolding narrative is the key to effective interviewing. By helping the participants memorize their experience, the unfolding narrative was further supported. Contrastingly, if the phase furthest from the present was immediately questioned, a discussion lacking both depth and variety might have been a risk. Additionally to the timely stages, I had several aspects, which I hoped the participants would respond on by their own experiences, reflecting back to the used theoretical background:

1. Self-efficacy (chapter 5.1.1)
2. Perception towards the self and exercising
3. Internal and external motivations (chapter 5.2.1)
4. “Pros and cons” of exercise, temptations endangering relapse (chapter 5.1.1)

5. Role of the PT, successful and unsuccessful elements in the training

It should still be noticed, that words such as self-efficacy, pros and cons weren't used in the interviews, based on more general questions. In addition, I continuously encouraged the participants to share any other personal meanings they would see as relevant, potentially introducing new and unexpected information to the research. In the following chapter, I have discussed some acknowledged limitations in regards to the data collection.

6.2.2 Limitations and criticism regarding the applied methodology

In order to complete a chosen research method sufficiently, it is important to understand both the strengths and weaknesses it withholds. I find this to strengthen the research in both produced results, as well as its overall reliability. Therefore, firstly worth reminding oneself, is that interviews themselves are not fully objective research techniques. As noted by Smith and Sparkes (2016), it is natural, that the interviewing situation is shaped and effected by, for example, social factors, viewpoints and reactions to the elements of that specific situation.

This "shaping" can be understood as a "mirroring effect", between the interviewee and the interviewed. In an interviewing situation the researcher has responsibility to create a truthful outcome for the received data. Since the individual interviews were completed in a closed space lacking outer distractions, I was aware of my position in risking the production of such bias. Likewise Ezzy and Liamputtong (2005), noted qualitative interviewing to require constructive response to the subjectivity of interviews, rather than denying its existence. For these reasons, I remained cautious of not leading the participants' responses by, for instance, tone, facial expressions, body language, personal opinions or mentioning the theoretical elements as themselves, during any stage of the interview. Instead, I saw importance in remaining neutral and reflective towards the participant's responses, concentrating on encouragement and further probing.

The second issue, which I have taken to consideration, is the limitation or criticism regarding the use of memorizing lived experiences as a source of data. Quoted by Smith and Sparkes (2016), human memory isn't an objective database; "our words, like our memories provide an evolving constructed and constructive interpretation of experiences" (Smith & Sparkes, 2016, 118). Therefore, the participants respond to my questions through their individual

interpretations and experiences, in some cases affected by passed time. However, I would consider this to be the case in all research, not merely limited to interviewing. At the end, even literal or numerical answers are provided through the participants' personal interpretations of the matter at hand, in similar ways, potentially affected by time. Finally, the events discussed have occurred in the near history of the participants' lives (max. 2 yrs. prior the interviewing) and the interviewing structure (chapter 6.2.1) was specifically planned to support their memorization.

Finally, I have took notice of the fact that information received from a small group is not necessarily generalizable on a large population. As I investigate the individual experiences of five participants, it is true, that every story is, somewhat unique and ungeneralizable. In my opinion, this can be seen as a weakness, but also as a strength to ideally discover new information hidden in the "causes behind the causes", challenging to measure by numerical data. After all, a need for information higher in detail has been established, in regards of exercise or its lacking, in the daily lives of individuals (Eskola et al., 2012). While the average duration of each interview was from 60 to 90 minutes, a larger scope of participants wouldn't fit within the limitations of writing a Master's thesis. However, the information gained from this group can set a potential base for further analysis in future research.

6.3 The completion of the data collection

The data collection of this study was completed between October and December 2017, during which five individual interviews were held. Prior to the interviewing situation, the participants remained unaware of the upcoming questions; I wanted to remain flexible in supporting the discussions through their personal life events. Therefore, I expected a range of variety in the responses. As previously noted, the flexibility (spontaneity) and reciprocity serve the intentions and meaning of semi-structured interviewing, especially when unfolding an individual narrative (Ezzy & Liamputtong, 2005; Galletta, 2012). For this reason, I didn't want to intrude on that flexibility, by requiring answers for an exact set of questions in advance. However, the interview base remained same for each participant, to ensure the comparability of the received data for analysis. Rather, the differences between the interviews focused on the exact form of the questions, further probing, as well as the use of sub- or close-ended, specifying questions.

However, the participants were aware, which of their experiences were the focus of discussion. Therefore, they had prepared to share their experiences of physical inactivity, its transformation to exercise maintenance as well as the successful and unsuccessful elements experienced during the course of their own personal training. The anonymity of the study was introduced before the interviewing began; only age and gender would be kept truthful and the PTs would similarly remain unidentified. I sensed these actions to support the comprehensiveness of the received data, when discussing sensitive matters. Finally, the interview structure, using the timely stages (chapter 6.2.1) was presented, to prevent a situation, where the interviewed would urge to speak of matters considering all phases in their experience, at once. The calm, guided, process progressing through each phase supported handling the transformation of the selected themes thoroughly within their timely frames.

All of the interviews were recorded with the participants' permissions. Four interviews were conducted in person and one was implemented through a Skype video call, due to long distance. Interestingly, Smith and Sparkes (2016), have mentioned the strength of online interviewing in discussing sensitive matters, since the participant might present personal and emotional matters more willingly. On the other hand, the weakness would lie in the risk of technical failures and the lack of visible body language. In this case, all participants were open to discuss personal matters without significant differences between one another. The Skype interview was both conducted and recorded successfully without any significant technical failures.

6.4 Method of data analysis

Following the completed data collection and written transcriptions, I ended up with 89 pages of transcribed documents. In regards for the data analysis, I had a few points to keep in mind, while considering the options at hand. Firstly, despite the fact that I had included aspects from two chosen theories in this study (chapter 5), I didn't intend to hand them a dominant role in terms of interpreting the experiences presented to me by the participants. Rather, my intention was to take advantage of the knowledge, and use it to support understanding the experiences presented. The main issue being, that in this research the dominant source of information was the transcribed interviews, whether or not they would agree with the used theory

Generating from the previously mentioned reasons, my priority wasn't to prove the applicability of the used theoretical aspects on this exercise setting (accomplished by previous research), nor use a theoretically bounded method for data analysis. Therefore, methods such as grounded theory weren't an option. I found thematic data analysis to match my intentions, but also interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to share commonalities. Both methods are useful in understanding multiple perspectives on lived experiences or phenomenon, therefore well applicable to analyze interviews. Additionally, the IPA is recommended on small sample sizes, to ensure in-depth individual analysis and use it to describe a phenomenon. On the other hand, the strength of thematic data analysis is its flexibility in organizing, describing and interpreting data. (Burton et al., 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006) The flexibility of the later mentioned concluded to its selection for this study, combining the experiences with various areas of literature at use.

Firstly, the themes referred to in thematic data analysis (and IPA) are meant by patterned responses and meanings in the data, which reflect as important elements to answering the research questions. These patterns can both converge towards each other and the expected findings, or contrastingly depart from them, offering new perspectives on the research topic. (Burton et al., 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006) Worth attention is, that identifying such themes should begin from the interviewing situation, as patterned responses and meanings begin to emerge. Therefore, qualitative data analysis of this nature can be seen as an ongoing cycle, continuously returning to further study the meanings, approaching their full understanding. (Burton et al., 2014; Galletta, 2012) I found the previous true in this research, where the participants' discussed constantly the issues which they had experienced personally important. Their understanding strengthened in the reading process; however the details had to be returned to constantly throughout the data analysis.

Overall, in data analysis the researcher has an active role to firstly identify the themes and secondly report them to the reader (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In regards to this research, the flexibility offered by thematic data analysis was useful in terms of seeking themes to describe the participants' understanding of their experiences, later on reflecting their relatability to the two theories and previous research. Following, is an explanation of how I identified the themes in practice, using my first research question (chapter 3.2) as an example. Since the interviewing had succeeded to follow its planned base (chapter 6.2.1), it was something to take advantage of in separating the essential data for its analysis.

After thoroughly reading the transcripts, I copied the timely phase of precontemplation (physical inactivity) from each one to a separate file, along with additional related quotes, from the surrounding stages. The themes, which I began to search for were elements describing how and why exercise had been perceived as, the barriers for participation and what other issues had led to the sedentary life lived.

For the reason that I only had five participants to focus on, I didn't feel the need to work with a numerical coding system in the course of identifying the themes and their commonality. Instead, I used different colors to separate the various themes brought up. For example, the sections in which the fear of being exposed to differing social situations was described I colored brown, and further on united these quotes to one theme of social anxiety. I didn't edit the sections, intending to keep them at their original form to use in the results as quotes. While working with the coloring, I wrote a list of all themes mentioned along with their participants on top of the file for the research question at hand. Therefore, this list supported the following stage of writing the results. I remained flexible towards any interpretations emerging for the phenomenon in question and likewise chose the themes by what the participants' individually emphasized as relevant experiences, thoughts or views, later on uniting with the others, to answer my research questions emphasizing their commonality.

6.5 Introduction of the selected participants

Closing the discussed implementation section for this research, is a brief introduction of the five selected participants. As can be seen in the following, before beginning the interviewing I collected the background information for the participants, consisting the duration of their personal training, previous experience from exercise, time of physical inactivity (any particular causes related to it) and age. It should be reminded, that due to the guaranteed anonymity, all names have been changed, but the ages remain truthful, representing the time when the interviews were completed (chapter 6.3). It should also be mentioned, that the participants hadn't hired the same personal trainer, but belonged to three separate ones.

Kate (28 yrs.), had avoided exercising since the time of coming across negative experiences in school sports, during both secondary and high school. She didn't feel any need to participate in exercise, until the age of 26 years. At this time, the hope of improving her constantly unbearable back pain concluded the decision of giving strength training a chance, guided by a

PT. In this case, the alternative would have been a constant increase in experienced medical treatment at that time. Therefore, Kate began her personal training in February 2016, without previous experience from the gym environment nor other physically active hobbies.

Laura (27 yrs.), had begun her personal training in September, 2015. During her youth (15-17 yrs.), she had been actively involved in boxing, but quit because her training partner did the same, during that time. Following, she practiced some gym training and at times participated in group exercise classes, from one to two years. However, after moving to another city, she gave up on all exercise from six to seven years, until the point of hiring her PT.

Sara (29 yrs.), hadn't found enjoyment from exercising before the time of her personal training, which she described as the first form of exercising she really wanted to attend. Before giving up all exercise for 13 months, she had participated in floorball practice, approximately once per week. However, during this time she didn't seek alternative activities for the periods, when the hobby was on break for, and therefore had remained insufficiently physically active for the most part of her adult life. Her physical inactivity begun from a difficult pregnancy, when she was advised not to exercise from two to three months by medical personnel. Further on in this pregnancy, she became diagnosed with diabetes. Shaken by the diagnosis, she began her personal training in May 2016, without any previous experience from the gym environment.

Peter (35 yrs.), had participated in personal training since August, 2016, hoping to change a range of negative life habits. Earlier during that same year, he had been mostly physically inactive, a period following a change in his family situation and lacking a feeling of capability to take on constant exercise by himself. However, before this time he had some experience from gym training and badminton, and had an overall positive perception towards exercise. However, he found that getting back to any constant physical activity would be too challenging alone and needed someone to push him back on track.

Mary (59 yrs.), began her personal training in January 2017, before which she had had a negative impression on exercising. Not feeling any desire to begin physical activities, she noted to having remained physically inactive for at least 10 years. A turning point was met, when her health collapsed, while suffering an aggressive infection. Consequently, the poor health status, losing a significant proportion of her bodyweight, muscles, strength and general coping forced her to change her lifestyle and accept exercise as one part of it. However,

before taking on the dominantly sedentary lifestyle, she had trained at the gym during some periods in her life, and therefore had previous experience from that environment.

As described in the introductions, the group of participants share a comparable exercise history of firstly living a phase of physical inactivity, from which they began their personal training. At the time of the held interviews, all five participants continued with their exercise routines, lacking any intention to return to their sedentary life. At this point, they had been exercising from 11 to 27 months, Kate being the only participant who had progressed to train independently for the past nine months.

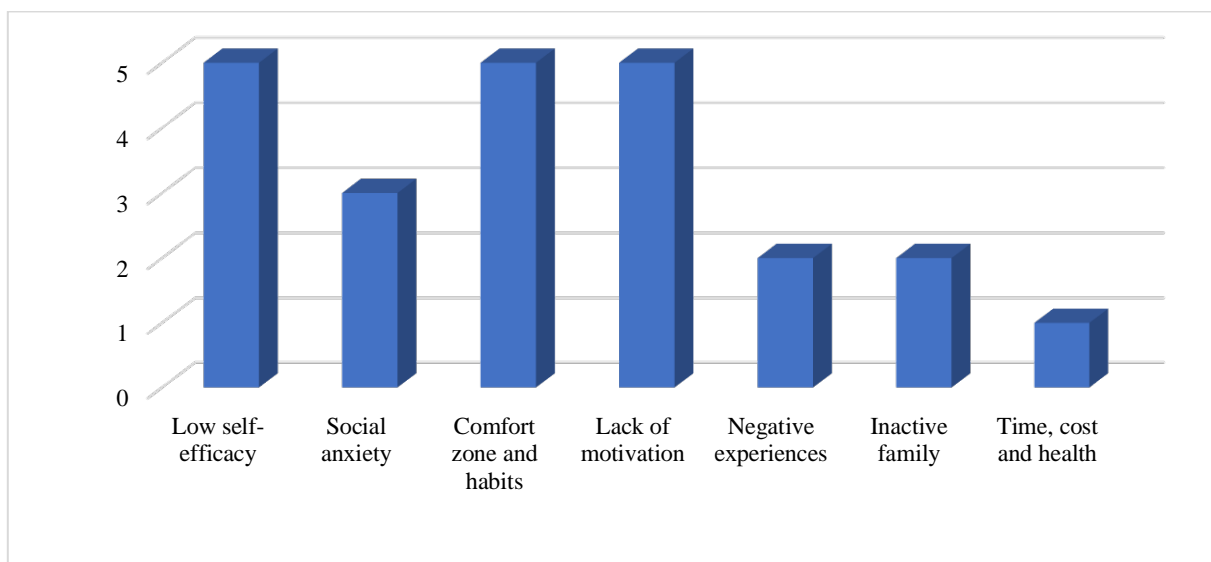
7. RESULTS

Following is the discussion presenting the results for this study. Firstly, the previously experienced barriers for exercise are analyzed, after which the initial motivations to begin exercise are examined. Finally, the motivational change between the stage, in where the participants' weren't yet involved with exercise and where they had become active exercisers are compared. Relevant aspects linking the experiences with the used theory are adapted inside the discussion, which again is largely supported by direct, translated, quotes from the held interviews. At times, dialogue has also been included to these quotes, in which case my questions as the interviewer are separated from the participant's responses.

7.1 Perceived barriers for exercise participation and causes behind physical inactivity

Beginning to answer the first research question of this study, it should be mentioned, that no single cause nor barrier concluding to physical inactivity was addressed by any participant. Rather, the phase of inactivity was mutually seen to evolve through a combination of multiple elements, described with further detail in the upcoming chapters.

Figure 3: Recognized barriers for exercise participation by the participants



The results unraveled to being very interesting (figure 3). Sara was the only participant to mention time and cost as barriers to exercise participation. However, she also mentioned them to have an impact when she lived in a rural location, lacking opportunities to exercise,

therefore not extending to effect the entire phase of her physical inactivity. Additionally, Sara alone brought up health as one barrier, for the reason that she had been advised not to exercise from two to three months during the difficulties in the beginning of her pregnancy.

The reason, for which I described the results as interesting is, that in the course of previous research the aspects of time and cost have been raised more generally as barriers to exercise (Borodulin et al., 2016; Carraça et al., 2012; Special Eurobarometer 412., 2014). Therefore, this research differs from this aspect, as the following discussion focuses on those barriers, to which relatedness was found between two or more participants. In order to summarize the discussion, low self-efficacy is combined with social anxiety (chapter 7.1.1), comfort zone and habits with the lack of motivation (chapter 7.1.2) and negative experiences with an inactive family (chapter 7.1.3).

7.1.1 Low self-efficacy and social anxiety

Engaging to the literal field of sports psychology, it had come to my notice that the role self-efficacy took in either participating or avoiding exercise was reappearing and constant. For clarification, perceiving oneself as not competent/skillful enough or being a suitable person to perform the chosen physical activities is meant here by low self-efficacy in the exercise setting (Bauman et al., 2012; Biddle & Mutrie, 2008; Carraça et al., 2012). Additionally, as the TTM also assumes self-efficacy to being the lowest at the stage of precontemplation (chapter 5.1.1), I was expecting that low self-efficacy would be brought up by perhaps two or three of the participants, as to why they had avoided exercising. However, it turned out as an issue, which every participant related with.

"My essence caused uncertainty. What if I'm just suddenly going to fall down? If I have such a bad balance and so on. What if I just can't train so hard. I'm still sweating a lot. In the beginning, much more. That was also, really, embarrassing. It was horrible. Like what if I'll leave a stain and I don't notice it and I'll leave... everything like that." "Mun olemus. Entä jos mä yhtäkkiä tästä vaikka kaadun.... jos mulla on vaikka niin huono tasa paino ja tämmöiset. Entä jos mä en jaksakaan. Mä hikoilen vieläkin ihan hirveästi. Hikoilin silloin vielä enemmän... Se oli kauheaa. Entäs jos mulla jää tähän laitteeseen joku märkä hiki läntti ja mä en huomaa sitä, mä vaan lähden tästä ja... kaikki tuommoset." Sara

"I wanted to begin Street dance at one time. But I thought that I'm too fat to go there. There was that barrier of how you looked. I had interest in different things. Even if I'd had money, as a student, there was that, everybody would be so slim, so what would I go there to do. I was really stiff as well. So then, I just thought, I didn't want to go there to embarrass myself." "Mä halusin Street -tanssia alkaa joskus harrastaa. Siinä oli semmoinen, että mä sit aattelin, että oon liian lihava sinne. Siinä oli se kynnys omasta ulkomuodosta. Mulla oli

mielenkiintoa eri asioihin. Plus sitten tietysti opiskeluaikana ei hirveästi rahaa ollut harrastaa kaikkea. Vaikka ois ollut rahaa, niin sit siinä tuli se, että siellä kaikki muut on semmoisia hoikkia, niin mitäs minä meen sinne pyörimään. Ja sit kun mä oon kankea kuin rautakanki, niin en mä viitti lähteä itteeni nolaamaan sinne.” Laura

“There were those bad memories, bad experiences from not moving, at all. So, at first, I felt that I can’t. I couldn’t become this exerciser.” “Kun just on ollut niitä huonoja muistoja, huonoja kokemuksia, sitä, ettei ollut liikkunut yhtään. Mulla oli alunperin vähän semmoinen olo, että enhän mä pysty ees siihen. Et musta tulee semmoinen liikkuja.” Kate

“Anything we tried... I couldn’t do it. Since I felt that I weighed 100kg all the time. All the time. And, I really didn’t. Then I didn’t even have muscles anymore, just bones. Just that itself... I felt afraid all the time to lean on anything. That it would break, like the equipment or something.” “Kun mitä tahansa yritettiin... mä en pystynyt. Kun mä tunsin, että... tunsin itseni sata kiloiseksi koko ajan. Koko ajan. Ja mä en todellakaan ollut. Silloin mulla ei ollut edes lihasta, kun mulla oli pelkät luut. Se jo pelkästään... Koin koko ajan, etten mä uskaltanut mihinkään nojatakaan, et se hajoo, joku laite ja muuta...” Mary

In Peter’s case, the experienced uncertainty towards himself in the exercise setting wasn’t as strong, compared with the female participants. However, he as well found incompetence to begin exercising alone, when asked upon: *“Yes, that’s how I felt. I didn’t do anything for a long time, and I knew that the beginning would be difficult, as it was. Kyllä, mulla oli. Suht pitkään aikaan en tehnyt mitään. Tiesin, että se aloitus tulee muutenkin olemaan taas paha.” Peter* Likewise, the intensity of the begun training caused uncertainty: *“At times, when I was going there [gym], I really didn’t know, if I could do it. Välillä kun meni sinne [salille], niin ei tiennyt, että selviikö tästä” Peter*

Comparing the experienced self-efficacy with how the TTM assumes it to transform, being the lowest during precontemplation and contemplation matched the theory; its presence was the strongest during the phases of physical inactivity and in the starting point of personal training. On the other hand, at times theory of the TTM suggests self-efficacy to “peak” in the maintenance phase, which again occurs from six months to two years of practicing a behavior. (Dishman et al., 2011) This study supports self-efficacy to increase through each experienced stage, but slowly. The interviewed majority expressed uncertainty regarding their capability to complete the training on their own, up to two years from its beginning. This can give insight on just how slow the transformation of self-efficacy may be in change, therefore, leaving its “peak” to lie ahead in future years to come.

“I don’t really trust myself, if I go to a shop and I don’t have anything concrete. I’ll buy that chocolate, eat it and stay on that track. I don’t trust myself that much yet. In that way, it’s really important, that I have a PT. Who tells me, what to do. Gives advice and follows me and my results. Even though I have 18 months of training behind me, I still think, that I could go back to my old ways of being.” “Mä en ehkä itseeni vielä luota ihan hirveän paljon siinä, että

jos mä meen kauppaan ja jos mulla ei oo mitään tarkkaa juttua. Mä kuitenkin ostan sen suklaalevyn pian, syön, ja jään sille tielle. Mä en itteeni luota kuitenkaan vielä ihan hirveästi. Mulle on tosi tärkeitä siinäkin mielessä, että mulla on joku PT. Kuka sanoo, mitä mun pitää tehdä. Antaa niitä neuvoja. Mulla on joku, joka seuraa mua ja mun tuloksia ja sillain. Kuitenkin, vaikka puolitoista vuotta jo takana niin silti, musta tuntuu, että mä saattaisin palata siihen vanhaan.” Sara

“Sometimes, you might think that I don’t do enough. Then, you start listening to others, some of who don’t go to the gym at all. Then your like, wait a second, maybe I’m actually not that bad. Well, maybe not bad but just... maybe I actually am a bit more productive.” “Vaikka ite omassa päässä mietti, että mä en tee esim. tarpeeksi, niin sitten kun rupeaa kuuntelemaan muita. Et muut ei esimerkiksi... jotkut ei käy ollenkaan salilla, niin sitten tulee semmoinen, että hetkonen. En mä ehkä ookaan niin huono. Tai no, huono on ehkä vähän väärä valinta, mut silleen, että ehkä mä oonkin enemmän aikaansaavempi.” Laura after 6 months of training

“Absolutely, there is a need [for the PTs presence]. At one point, I thought that when I get all these tips, developing programs and so on, I could go alone. But that time is not even near yet.” “Kyllä. Ehdottomasti [tarve PT:n läsnäololle]. Ei niin kuin vielä tullut... Jossain vaiheessa mä aattelin, että tästä kun saa kaikkia vinkkejä ja... Kehitettyä ohjelmia ja muuta, niin sit voi käydä vaan yksin sitten jossain vaiheessa. Mutta, ei oo kyllä vielä lähelläkään se aika.” Peter after 14 months of training.

Shifting the discussion to the role of social anxiety, in the case of three female participants, this theme emerged as being the strongest during the stages of physical inactivity, beginning of the training or both. Consequently, the assumed personal inadequacy wasn’t the only challenge to face, but a situation, where people might evaluate them or act in a way which would cause anxiety, was a difficult element to be exposed to in the exercise setting.

-“Then, of course, there was that... feeling ashamed of myself, my appearance; like how did I let myself get to this state? In that situation [physical inactivity], you didn’t really think that I’ll go out for a run. I’ll do something about it. Rather, you just want to hide.” Sitten tietysti oli just se, että häpesi itteensä... sitä ulkomuotoa jo valmiiksi, että miten mä oon päästänyt itteni tähän kuntoon? Siinä tilanteessa [liikkumattomuus] ei tavallaan ajatellut sitä, sitä kautta, että nyt mä lähden lenkille. Mä teen asialle jotain. Vaan haluaa vain piiloutua. Laura

-“What did you think, would have happened, in your vision, of going to the gym? Even though, you didn’t actually go there, at that time?” “Mitä ajattelit, että ois tapahtunut, jos mietit itteäsi siinä tilanteessa; jos oisit mennyt sinne salille. Vaikka sä et lähtenytäkään, mutta siinä sun mielikuvassa? Mitä siinä ois käynyt? Interviewer

-“Well, I think I’d have been afraid of the judgment. What other people would think. It shouldn’t really affect my life, in any way. But I was afraid, that they would stare and then I’d feel awkward. When you didn’t feel good about yourself, then that kind of exposure... Even though, nobody cared. But, when you were thinking about it that yes, now they are watching and judging me. It is really tranquilizing. When you aren’t satisfied with yourself, you don’t want to go out somewhere where there are other people. It really limited doing anything. That I didn’t want to go anywhere.” “Epäilisin, että kyllä mua peloittaisi se arvostelu. Mitä muut ihmiset miettii. Vaikka, ei se mun elämää pitäisi liikuttaa millään tasolla. Mut kyllä mä pelkäsin sitä, että ihmiset kattoo. Ja sit mulle tulee kiusallinen olo. Kyllä se oli vaan

semmoista, että jos ei itellä ole hyvä olla, niin sitten se altistus muille... vaikka ketään ei kiinnostaiskaan, vaikka kukaan ei edes kattoisi. Mutta, kun sä ite mietit sitä, että noni, nyt ihmiset kattoo ja arvostelee. Se on tosi semmoinen, lamaannuttava. Kun ei ite ole tyytyväinen, niin et sä halua mennä mihinkään ihmisten ilmoille. Kyllä se tosi paljon supisti sitä omaa tekemistä. Ettei vaan halunnut oikeasti mennä mihinkään.” Laura

Following the time of giving up exercising, the shame Laura felt from gaining weight evolved to a need to “hide away”. The situation didn’t only have an effect on avoiding any social exercise setting, but life in general, for example, by continuously arranging meeting friends at somebody’s home. The anxiety experienced towards the social environment was the strongest during the phase of her physical inactivity, anyhow continuing to impact the beginning of her training, as she didn’t feel ready to enter the gym without her PT.

-”Firstly, I was of course afraid of being in a really bad shape, as I was. That made me anxious and then, maybe not about the training itself, but that everyone was watching. That she’s so bad and that kind of judgement.” ”Ensinnäkin, tietysti, pelkäsin sitä, että mä oon ihan rapakunnossa ja olinhan mä rapakunnossa. Kyllä se jännitti ja sit, tää ei ehkä ihan treenaamiseen sinällään liity, mut siinä oli se just, että muut kattoo; että, onpa tuo huono ja semmoinen arvostelu.” Laura

-“You were nervous about that?” “Ahdistus siitä?” Ruth

-“Yes, and especially, I understand when you sometimes see articles, where big people have been laughed at in the gym. I understand the barrier to go there. There are so many people, who are in a great shape. When you go there, and you are the biggest person in the entire gym. It is a barrier to start. Probably many, in their thoughts... if their would not be that inefficiency, well then there is the fear of being evaluated.” “Joo, ja etenkin, ymmärrän, kun välillä törmää joihinkin artikkeleihin, missä on naurettu isokokoisille ihmisille esim., ketkä on ollut salilla. Mä ymmärrän sen kynnyksen lähteä sinne. Koska siellä on paljon ihmisiä, ketkä on tosi hyvässä kunnossa. Sit kun sä meet sinne ja sä oot isokokoisin koko salissa. Kyllä se on semmoinen kynnyks aloittaa. Vaikka moni varmasti ajatuksen tasolla... jos ei olis sitä saamattomuutta, niin pelottaa se arvostelu.” Laura

In the case of Sara, she described experiencing comparable feelings of anxiety and embarrassment, as the time to begin her personal training was approaching. Such feelings had slightly postponed the beginning of her training, as finding an approachable PT took its time.

”I was really anxious about the first meeting and generally about choosing the PT. It took me a very long time to think about whom I would dare to go. Who wouldn’t look at me like, what is that fat person doing here.” “Kyllähän mua jännitti ihan hirveästi se ensimmäinen tapaaminen. Ja yleensäkin se PT:n valinta. Mä hirveän kauan mietin, että kenelle mä kehtaan mennä. Kenellä mä uskallan mennä, kukakohan ei kattoisi mua sillain, että mitäköhän tuokin lölykkä täällä tekee.” Sara

-”In the beginning, I felt really insecure going to the gym. Always really nervous.” “Olinhan mä toisaalta tosi epävarma, että kyllä mua aina jännitti mennä sinne salille [aluksi]” Sara

-”What caused that uncertainty?” “Mitkä asiat aiheutti sitten sitä epävarmuutta sulla?” Interviewer

-”I thought that everyone was staring... that what is she trying. Poor thing, holding a kettlebell. Trying to squat. People underestimating. Watching, downgrading. Some mirroring themselves, and so on. That was something I was really stressed and nervous about. Probably nobody really looked at me like that. Or mirrored themselves. They were just my own thoughts and anxiety.” “Just se, että mä aattelin, että muut kattoo... Että mitäköhän toikin tuossa yrittää. Raukka, tuolla kahvakuula kädessä. Vähän yrittää kyykätä. Ihmiset jotenkin aliarvioi. Kattoo nokan vartta pitkin... Jotkut peilailee siellä tai tämmöistä. Mä semmoista jotenkin hirveästi stressasin ja jännitin. Eihän siellä kukaan oikeasti mua varmaan kattonut mitenkään. Eikä kukaan oikeasti pullistellut peilien edessä. Se oli vaan sillain, semmoista ihan omaa, korvien välissä, olevaa jännitystä.” Sara

Sara found, that this anxiety of being judged was present for the first six months of her training, until the point she decided to switch the gym she was training at, following her PT. Finally, before beginning her training, Kate was also prepared for people to laugh and downgrade her. However, this was something she reflected back from her school-time memories (7.1.2). Her case differed from the previous two, since she continued to avoid entering a social exercise environment alone, until the point of the held interviews. The reason for this was described as a feeling of safety, when there was family to exercise with.

“If the situation was that nobody would go with me to the gym, well then I’ll exercise in some other way. So, going to the gym alone, for me, is just impossible.” “Jos ois tilanne se, ettei kukaan lähde mukaan, niin sitten mä liikun jollain muulla tavalla kun meen salille. Et se, yksinään salille meneminen on mulle ihan mahdottomuus.” Kate, after 21 months of exercising

Mary didn’t experience social anxiety as a barrier for her exercise, becoming used to such social exposure during her time as a performing artist. However, she did notice a change from avoiding training at the main areas of the gym in the beginning, to insisting to train there within a year from the start. Additionally, she supported the idea of focusing on physical elements in exercise promotion as a highly negative approach to take.

”I’ll say as a big person that I am... I still feel very big. Indicating anything towards the weight or that being is extremely... It always goes to a personal level. When I was big, if somebody would say that wouldn’t it be nice, if you dropped some weight. It immediately comes across as a very negative thing.” “Koska mä sanon, isona ihmisenä joka olen... tunnen itseni vielä hyvin isoksi. Kuitenkin, että viitataan yhtään mihinkään siihen painoon tai semmoiseen olemukseen, se on älyttömän... siinä mennään aina henkilökohtaiselle tasolle. Silloin, kun mä olin iso. Niin jos joku rupee mulle sanomaan, että eikö se ois kiva, että jos sä pudottaisit painoa. Se tulee heti sellaisena negatiivisenä.” Mary

In regards to this research, the emphasis of social anxiety towards the exercise setting was somewhat unexpected. Additionally, it is a rather rare encounter in research focusing on the general population. Consequently, its comparison to previous research is challenging, as a barrier for exercising. Hart et al. (1989) supported, that the consideration of social evaluation

in the field of sport and exercise has been ignored. It was noted, that anxiety towards such evaluation may result to those being in the greatest need for, i.e. aerobic exercise, to becoming the most reluctant of joining its practice. The proportion of people being prevented to participate in beneficial physical activities by anxiety towards others evaluation was thereby suggested as an area for future research. (Hart et al., 1989) Continuing from this study, it would be interesting to complete further research in discovering the amount of a larger sample of physically inactive people, experiencing social anxiety as a barrier for exercise participation.

However, the previously discussed impact of self-efficacy has been raised in the sport and exercise field. Bauman et al. (2012) summarized knowledge gained from systematic reviews, regarding the correlates and determinants of physical activity in all age groups. They found, that self-efficacy wasn't only the clearest correlate in adults, but also a positive, consistent correlate and determinant in physical activity practiced by children and adolescents. Borodulin et al. (2016), brought up studies dedicated on the adult population suggesting, that lower self-efficacy could be a barrier for physical activity in lower socio-economic groups. However, in this case lower self-efficacy as a general barrier was left without attention. Likewise, acknowledging the role of self-efficacy raised in the Transtheoretical Model (chapter 5.1.1), became beneficial on the results of this research.

7.1.2 Absence of motivation to exercise and the effect of old habits

The second combination of perceived barriers to exercise were condensed to a spiral of lacking the motivation or energy to change contrasting life habits, and therefore remaining still in a personal comfort zone, affecting every participant. Therefore, lacking motivation or need to exercise, along with the desire to remain in the comfort zone, continuing to practice old habits, resulted as the most common barriers along with low-self-efficacy. Before beginning their personal training, Mary and Kate had perceived exercising as a separate element, simply not belonging in their life.

- "You live in a nice little bubble. That everything goes just great... It's comfy to be, when you're fat." "Sitä elää semmoisessa kivassa kuplassa, että kaikki menee hemmetin hyvin... lihavan on mukava olla." Mary

- "You were happy with your life?" "Olit tyytyväinen sun elämään?" Interviewer

-“I was happy. I didn’t miss, in any form, anything like this [exercise].” “Mä olin tyytyväinen elämään, en kaivannut siihen millään, muotoa mitään tämmöistä [liikuntaa].” Mary

”It [exercising] felt like this totally distant thing, to me. Something, that didn’t belong in my life. It also felt, like it didn’t need to. Especially, when the weight maintained itself.” “Se [liikunta] tuntui sellaiselta täysin, tosi etäiseltä, asialta mulle ja semmoiselta, joka ei mun elämään kuulu. Oli kanssa semmoinen olo, ettei sen tarviikaan. Varsinkin, kun paino pysyi ihan itsessään kurissa.” Kate

It should be noticed, that Kate and Mary were also the two participants, who brought up the absence of exercising in their family habits, during their youth (chapter 7.1.3). Therefore, it can be suggested, that a connection between not experiencing exercising within family habits, and not obtaining it during adulthood, may exist. This has been supported by Augustson et al. (2016), in the results of their study on Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC). It has been stated, that physical activity patterns during childhood and adolescents are important, since they track moderately from adolescence to adulthood. Likewise, the case is the same with obtained sedentary behavior during childhood and adolescence, similarly tracking its way to adulthood. However, it should also be noticed that a need to exercise cannot be expected from everyone, but in some cases sedentary leisure-time activities are simply preferred.

In contrast, Laura and Peter perceived exercising as something positive, which they wanted to fulfil but still, didn’t find the motivation nor energy to take the first step towards.

”It’s probably more so, that if you have a break, there is a barrier to return to it [exercise]. You think that you should, but no. For instance, you feel that you don’t have the energy. Then in some way, when the break has been big enough, you think that it has been so long that what is there to do. It (the barrier) expands all the time. The longer the break, the more difficult it becomes to get going again. Of course, if you think about weight-training, it hurts more after a long break than it would if you’d keep it up. I would say, that it was my own inefficiency and then, if I can say, the drive for comfort. It’s easier to stay at home and watch television to go... whatever the weather, go to the gym.” Laura

“Se on varmaan enemmän semmoinen, että jos on taukoa, niin siihen [liikuntaan] on kynnys palata. On vähän niin, että pitäisi kyllä, mutta ei. Esimerkiksi tuntuu, että nyt ei jaksa. Sitten jollain tapaa, kun on ollut tarpeeksi pitkä tauko niin; tässä on mennyt niin kauan, niin mitäs tässä nyt. Se [kynnys] jollain tapaa, kasvaa koko ajan... mitä pidempi tauko, sitä kovempi kynnys lähteä uudestaan tekemään. Tietysti, jos miettii salitreeniäkin, niin kyllä se särkee enemmän pitkän tauon jälkeen, kun että jos sä käyt koko ajan tasaisesti treenaamassa. Kyllä mä sanoisin, että se on omaa saamattomuutta ja sitten mukavuudenhalua, että on helpompi jäädä sohvalle kattomaan telkkaria kuin... oli sää mikä tahansa, niin lähdet sinne salille.” Laura

"As time passed, I did feel, that I have to do something [exercise]. But there wasn't... The feeling of starting, was just too high to reach again." "Mulle oli kyllä ajan mittaan tullut semmoinen, että pakko tehdä jotain. Mut ei vaan ollut semmoista... se aloitusfiilis oli liian korkealla sit..." Peter

Before the stage of her physical inactivity, Sara had felt obligated to exercise once a week or less by participating in floorball, feeling that *"a person has to exercise somehow"*. However, Sara didn't find enjoyment from the activity, nor took on any replacing exercise during the summer periods, when it was on pause for. This may have been one cause for her stated lack of motivation and interest towards exercise, keeping it on an insufficient level, before taking on physical inactivity for 13 months, starting from the point of her difficult pregnancy.

"I don't think it [floorball] gave me a good feeling. If the floorball was about once a week and we were running up to our last breathe. Until there was no more energy. It wasn't fun. I liked to go as a group, when you are playing and running, then you don't notice the exercise. I thought that a person had to do some sport, that I can't leave everything out. Still, it felt forced; tonight there is floorball, do I feel up to it..." Mä en varmaan saanut siitä semmoista hyvän olon tunnetta, jos se oli tyliin kerran viikossa ja siellä sählyssäkin juostiin, niin kuin henkiiieverissä. Ihan viimeisiin voimiin asti. Se ei ollut semmoista hauskaa. Vaikka mä tykkäsin käydä siellä, kun porukalla pelaa ja juoksee, niin se tavallaan tulee huomaamatta se liikunta. Se oli vähän sellaista; pakko tässä on ihmisen jotakin liikuntaa harrastaa, ettei ihan kokonaan voi kaikkea jättää pois. Tavallaan, kuitenkin, semmoinen pakkopulla. Että, tänään illalla sählyä, voi että, jaksaisko lähteä..." Sara

During their phase of inactivity, all five participants mentioned practicing bad habits, such as a poor diet or alcohol consumption, in addition to their ongoing sedentary behavior. Laura, Peter and Mary recognized these habits as influencers for their physical inactivity, also just by themselves.

"Firstly, I didn't have energy. Probably, very much because of my own diet and other habits. There was the sugar, which makes you feel drowsy, and my overall diet was a bit of this and that. Surely, a lot of it was inefficiency plus then that physical state, because the other habits weren't in good condition." "Ensinnäkin oli tosi vetelä olo. Varmasti, hyvin pitkälti omista, sekä ruokailu, että muista tottumuksista. Oli se sokeri, mikä tekee tosi semmoisen vetelän olon, plus sitten se, että muutenkin ruokavalio oli mitä sattuu. Varmasti, tosi iso osa on ihan vaan saamattomuutta plus sitten oli vetelä olo, koska muutkaan elämäntavat ei ollut kondiksessa." Laura

"Probably, all that partying and everything drained my energy, I just didn't feel up to it." "Varmaan sit kaikki juhlimiset ja muut vei sitä energiaa, ei jaksanut." Peter

"Things happened in life... then, I made the mistake, of course... what others make as well. That I became completely ignorant towards myself. Didn't take care of myself. Shifted to bad ways. Not drugs, but a bit of drinking and so on. I think it's pretty normal." "Elämässä tapahtui kaikkea... sitten mä tein sen virheen, mitä tietysti... kyllä ne muutkin tekee. Että, oli ihan täysin välinpitämätön omaan itseensä. Ei pidä millään tavalla itsestään huolta. Ajautuu huonoille teille. Ei nyt sentään huumeita, mut on tissuttelua, on sitä sun tätä. Musta se on kuitenkin aika normaalia." Mary

In regards to previous research, comparable information on the habits of those physically inactive have been found. Eskola et al. (2009) found, that ignorance towards health enhancement and an absence of initiative to change habits were apparent in five of their seven recognized groups of insufficient exercisers (chapter 2.3), also indicating the previously discussed lack of motivation. In the same study, alcohol consumption was present in all seven groups and poor dietary habits in four. Alfredsson et al. (2016), resulted that the percentages of eating high-energy foods (i.e. candy) seldom, weekly, daily or several times a day were all slightly higher among their physically inactive participants, than of those physically active. Correspondingly, the physically active used more vegetables in their daily diets and had a higher healthy lifestyle score, including smoking behavior, under 10g per day alcohol intake and normal weight (Alfredsson et al., 2016).

In addition, experienced motivation to exercise has also been previously noticed to impact its practice (Bauman et al., 2012; Borodulin et al., 2015). Therefore, it can be concluded, that a lack of interest or motivation towards health-improvement and/or exercising as well as practicing poor habits have been recognized to relate with insufficient amounts of physical activity practiced among the adult population. In regards to this study, both had a significant relatability from all five participants.

7.1.3 Negative experiences and an inactive family

During the held interviews, perceptions towards sport and exercising the participants had during their physical inactivity were discussed. Relating to the way Mary and Kate had perceived exercising as something not belonging to their life, negative experiences from school and the absence of exercise within their family habits, were presented in by both. Therefore, despite their age gap of 30 years, these two participants shared a very similar course through which their perception towards exercise had developed.

-“You said, that you hated exercise, but why?” “Sanoit, että inhosit liikuntaa, mutta minkä takia?” Interviewer

-“Now I’d say, that it goes all the way down to school, ages ago. When I was never... successful in anything [exercise]. It has been so, that you put on those blue gymnastic suits and then they say that here is she and she is great. I was always among those last ones, doing pushups, huffing and puffing. That is where it started. It isn’t the schools’ fault. I just didn’t find it there.” “Nyt sanoisin, että varmaan se on perua jo sieltä kouluajoista, siis vuosituhsia sitten. Kun ei koskaan ollut... mä en ollut mikään onnistuja missään [liikunnassa]. Se on ollut juuri sitä, että ne siniset voimisteluasut päälle ja sitten siellä aina

sanottiin, että tässä on nyt sitten hän ja hän on hyvä. Sitä oli aina siellä viimeisten joukossa, punnersi ja ähki. Se on kyllä lähtenyt ihan sieltä. Eikä se ole sen koululaitoksen vika. Sieltä mä en löytänyt sitä.” Mary

“My only experience from exercising was from school. It had also ruined it. That was one reason, why I didn’t feel up to exercising at all.” “Ainoa kokemus liikunnasta oli koululiikunta. Sekin oli sen pilannut. Senkään takia ei huvittanut lähteä yhtään liikkumaan.” Kate

When asked upon, how school had “ruined” exercising for Kate, it turned out, that she had been denied to participate in physical education (P.E.) classes during both elementary and secondary school, experienced as appealing and motivating for her. It was seen, that collective team sports (i.e. football or basketball) were only appropriate for boys, and individual exercise (i.e. aerobics or dance) suited girls, killing her enthusiasm. Kate’s persistence to participate in P.E. for boys, in both elementary and secondary school, had made no significant changes to the system. Finally, a negative experience confronted during high school brought any further initiatives of exercising to its end for the following decade. In the upcoming years, Kate said to have experienced some envy towards those actively participating in sports. However, this feeling wasn’t strong enough to encourage exercising, until it was forced in her life, at the age of 26.

-“In high school, I went to try some exercise at the school gym, it was just us students there. I remember, they were laughing at me, like you don’t know anything. That looks really stupid, what are you thinking... it basically caused a gym phobia.” “Lukioliikunnassa oltiin siellä [kuntosalilla] keskenämme. Minä kun menin kokeilemaan liikkeitä, niin siellä oli nauramista ja semmoista, että et sä kyllä mitään osaa, tuo on tosi typerän näköistä, mitä sä luulet... Sitten tuli salikammo käytännössä.” Kate

-“After that you didn’t go to the gym again?” “Sen jälkeen sä et enää käynyt salilla ollenkaan?” Ruth

-“No. It was enough. I tried a few times, but that was always the experience I got, and nobody guided me. It caused this feeling. That I don’t know anything. They are right. They are absolutely right to laugh at me. A symptom from depression, of course. Those aren’t normal thoughts in that situation.” “Se riitti. Pari kertaa kävin yrittämässä, mut sitten kun kokemus oli aina tuo. Ei saanut ohjausta. Se teki sen, että tuli semmoinen olo. En osaa mitään, noi on ihan oikeassa. Ne on ihan oikeassa kun ne nauraa mulle. Oireena masennuksesta tietenkin. Eihän nuo normaaleja ajatuksia siinä tilanteessa ole.” Kate

Lauritsalo (2014), completed a research examining how physical education (P.E.) has been experienced from the Finnish school system. Essential points related to the quotes of Mary and Kate were, that the way students perceive themselves as exercisers is connected with their attitude towards exercising. It was stated, that taking on a physically active lifestyle requires a

positive relationship towards exercising, on which the students' experiences have a significant role on. The results presented, that dislike towards P.E. was seen to generate from situations causing strongly negative feelings. Likewise, emotional situations and sensitivity towards the differences between students were stated to require the attention of P.E. teachers, fulfilling a challenging role. (Lauritsalo, 2014) In this case, the strength of such negative experiences were emphasized, reminding of themselves within the discussion on exercise perceptions, further on in adulthood.

The commonalities found between Mary and Kate were intriguing. Like previously mentioned, in addition to recalling negative experiences from school sports, they were also the ones to bring up the absence of exercising in family habits during their youth.

“Another thing is, that in my family there isn’t... my mother and so on, they weren’t like that. Sport has never been a part of my family.” “Sitten mulla ei myöskään perheessä, mun äitini ja näin, ei mitenkään ollut sellaisia... urheilu ja tämmöiset asiat, niin ne ei koskaan ollut mun perheessä.” Mary

“One big reason [for not exercising] was, that my family is really physically inactive. So, I’ve always had that model from home, not exercising. It would have been difficult to start from there.” “Yksi aika iso [syy liikkumattomuuteen] on se, että meidän perhe on täysin liikkumaton. Aina ollut kotoakin se malli, ettei liikuta. Olisi ollut aika hankalaa siitä lähteä.” Kate

Research considering the relationship of physical inactivity and family habits of the adult population often indicate, i.e. having children, as one common association to inactivity, assumingly linked with the lack of time (Alfredsson et al., 2016; Borodulin et al., 2016). However, analysis of previously learned family habits may be given attention on the physical activity levels of children and youth, not so much of adults. This has been supported by Eskola et al., (2009) noting, that research on the development of exercising habits within previous family routines barely exists. However, it has been noticed, that habits regarding exercise, physical activity and sedentary behavior all moderately track their way from childhood to adulthood (Augustson et al., 2016; Eskola et al., 2009) Therefore, researching the impact of exercising experiences and habits experienced in youth could be another issue worth future attention while considering physical inactivity during adulthood.

7.2 Motivations to begin personal training and exercise

Following the period of physical inactivity, lasting from under one year to their adult lives, a turning point was met. All participants had made a choice to take on exercising after its avoidance which, in some cases, had continued for decades. This chapter begins to answer the second research question by firstly discussing, why the decision of hiring a PT and starting exercise was made (figure 4). It should be noticed, that the meaning for each motivation and reason given here, were only experienced so prior and during the starting point of the training. During the course of time, these meanings naturally transformed (chapter 7.3).

Figure 4. Motivations and reasons to begin personal training and exercise



Following a similar structure to chapter 7.1., the reasons and motivations (figure 4) for beginning the training are opened and discussed in the following chapters. Worth noticing here is, that all those mentioned were related to by more than two participants. Additionally, the given motivations are categorized to extrinsic and intrinsic types (chapter 7.2.3), before proceeding to analyze their transformation towards long-term exercise maintenance (chapter 7.3).

7.2.1 Reassurance for training success, self-learning and desired improvements in health

As might be expected, all five participants came to hire a PT, because they had a need for outer help and reassurance of their capability to achieve practicing an exercise routine. Regardless of this being a rather general acknowledgment, it can also be seen to reflect the equally relatable experience of low self-efficacy, functioning as a barrier to exercise (chapter 7.1.1). Therefore in this study, the experienced difficulty to participate in exercise, from not feeling competent, skillful or physically fit enough, also created one of the main reasons to hire outer help, reassure change and therefore begin exercise through personal training.

“There was this receptionist at the gym, with whom I went to talk to several times. I was looking for support. Because I was wondering, whether I was too old or just in such a bad shape, so could I be client. She said that everything was fine, that is when it started. I just needed somebody and I was given a person, who got me to the gym.” “Siellä [kuntosalilla] oli tämmöinen neuvontahenkilö. Hänen kanssa kävin useamman kerran keskustelemassa. Hain vähän semmoista tukea siihen. Kun mulle tuli, että olenko mä liian vanha ja liian huonokuntoinen. Oonko mä nyt tämmöinen asiakas. Sitten hän oli vaan että, tämä on ihan hyvä homma. Siitä se lähti. Mä tarvitsin jonkun ja mulle annettiin sellainen ihminen, joka mut sinne sai.” Mary

”In a way, it is also embarrassing to go and show, that this is the condition I’ve let myself in. Help me!” “Tavallaan noloakin mennä näyttämään, että tämmöiseen kuntoon mä oon itteni päästänyt, auta mua!” Sara

“That there would be someone from the outside, who would tell me, what to do. To feel a sense of duty. I had been dieting myself, it’s not about that, but I really wanted somebody to tell me, what I should do. I was reading about these things for years, so I knew a lot. Getting it done was very different. I was really bad in that.” “Että olisi ulkopuolinen, kuka kertoo mulle, mitä pitää tehdä. Olisi velvollisuudentunne. Oon mä laihduttanut itekin. Ei kyse ole siitä, mut halusin nimenomaan jonkun sanomaan mulle, mitä pitää tehdä. Mä tiedän näistä asioista tosi paljon, oon lukenut vuosikaudet kaikkea. Se, että sen saa käytännössä tehtyä oli asia erikseen, olin tosi saamaton.” Laura

Matching results have been recognized by Dail et al. (2011), noting that a sensed frustration of physical “failure”, needed help to sustain motivation in physical activity, emotional support and training guidelines would be several reasons to hire a PT, based on their study focused on five PT clients. Likewise, an apparent need to be guided and motivated towards the right direction among the general population has been suggested to being one reason for why the PT –industry has gained its popularity (Church et al., 2010). The previous could be sensed as strongly present within the participant group of this study, to whom physical inactivity was the norm and the gym (for three participants) an utterly new and somewhat strange environment, in which the hired PT offered a sense of security.

Relating to being reassured and given guidelines on training, two of the participants additionally discussed their motivation to learn about the training practice from the PT, before hiring. Both women had no previous experience from the gym environment and aimed to become self-reliant in terms of their own training in the future.

"I chose 26 sessions so that I would have time to adopt how to act in a gym. I had no idea. Then, there would be time to see some self-development and also to gain enough skills, so that I could continue on my own." "26 kertaa just sen takia, että siinä on riittävästi aikaa omaksua se, miten salilla toimitaan. Kun ei tosiaan ollut mitään tietoa. Ehti nähdä kehityksen itsessään ja kanssa se, että ehtisi saada riittävän monipuoliset taidot, että pystyi jatkamaan itseksensäkin." Kate

"I expected to get a feeling that I would know what I'm doing. To be confident and know which weights or which kettlebell to use. So, I could walk in the gym in a way that I didn't have to stand there and think help, should I go there or, what is that person thinking. I was rather unconfident at that time" "Niin mä ootin että, mulle tulisi semmoinen olo, että tietäisin, mitä mä teen. Sellainen varma olo, että mä tietäisin, mitkä painot mä otan. Tai, minkä kahvakuulan mä otan. Että, voin kävellä siellä salilla sillain, ettei mun tarvii tuossa seisoa ja miettiä, että apua... meenköhän mä tuohon vai, mitähän tuo ajattelee. Mä olin jotenkin aika epävarma silloin." Sara

Sharing its place as the most common reason to hire a PT was the desire to change a poor health status. Referred to by all five participants, here the specific meaning shifted from voluntarily adjusting life habits, fixing issues with sleep to finally reacting against major problems, which had left no other choice, but to begin exercise.

"The whole summer was just parties and travelling, I didn't do anything... I had this feeling, that if I don't do something now, I might end up never exercising. That all my life habits will slip out of my reach." "Koko kesän vaan juhlinut ja matkustellut, en ollut tehnyt mitään... Oli jotenkin semmoinen fiilis, että jos en nyt tee jotain niin tässä voi käydä niin, että yhtäkkiä en kuntoile ollenkaan. Että menee ihan, lähtee käsistä kaikki elämäntavat." Peter

"At first, I hoped it would have helped... I've had problems with sleeping since I was 16, but it didn't fix that. I still have to battle with it, quite a lot." "Mä toivoin alun perin, et siitä olisi tullut vähän helpotusta... mulla on ollut uniongelmia 16 -vuotiaasta, mut siihen se ei auttanut. Se on sellainen, minkä kanssa joutuu vähän kamppailemaan edelleenkin, tai ei vähän, aika paljonkin." Laura

"I had diabetes, during my pregnancy. That was what woke me up. That I really had to do something." "Tosiaan, siinä oli se raskausajan diabetes. Se oli mulla se, mikä herätteli. Että, pakko oikeasti jotain tehdä." Sara

"It was the acknowledgement that something had to be done for my back. Rest didn't help, it was all I did and made it worse. I didn't sleep for the pain. All the time I was awake it was horrible, so there were huge amounts of painkillers. I knew that life wouldn't be anything with that, I had to get rid of the pain. I knew that with the right kind of exercise and guidance I might be able to do that. So that there wouldn't always have to be more surgery or medication." "Se oli se tietoisuus siitä, että nyt on tehtävä, selän takia. Lepo ei auttanut. Sitähän mä vain tein silloin. Se pahensi sitä. Mä en nukkunut sen kivun takia. Kaikki hetket

kun olin hereillä niin oli ihan hirveät kivut, mulla meni kauheat määrät särkylääkkeitä. Tiesin, että elämästä ei tule mitään sen kivun kanssa, siitä on päästävä. Tiesin, että liikunnalla ja oikeanlaisella ohjauksella mä saattaisin kyetä tekemään sen. Ettei aina tarttis leikata tai lisää vaan lääkkeitä. Lähtisi terveyden kannalta. Ihan liikkumalla Siitä on päästävä. Tiesin, että liikunnalla ja oikeanlaisella ohjauksella mä saattaisin kyetä ite tekemään sen. Ettei aina tarttis leikata tai lisää vaan lääkkeitä.” Kate

“I think it started when I walked every day past the gym several times, to see my mother. I thought that all right, that is what I have to do, to stay alive. Since the new alternative had emerged. So, in order to live, I have to go there.” “Se lähti siitä sitten, kun oma tilanne oli se, että mä kävelin sen kuntosalin ohi joka päivä. Useampaan otteeseen, mutsin luokse. Sitten mä näin, että okei. Tuo on se, mitä mun täytyy tehdä, jotta mä elän vielä. Kun yksi uusi mahdollisuus tuli... Että jotta mä voin elää, mun täytyy mennä sinne.” Mary

As can be recognized, the health problems emerging during the phase of physical inactivity had been significant in the cases of three participants. Sara was "shaken" coming across diabetes during her pregnancy, Kate was living with unbearable back problems and pains, requiring continuous medical attention. Finally, Mary had been exposed to a serious infection, consequently losing her weight, strength and a sense of general physical coping until the point of being unrecognizable to herself. For the reason of improving the experienced health status being referred to overall a greater extent than desired physical changes, differences between this study and previous research are noticed, regarding the motivations to begin personal training.

A valued health status has been categorized as a clear determinant on being physically active (Bauman et al. 2012). Correspondingly, a lack of interest towards individual health or poor health has been previously associated with the physically inactive (Borodulin et al., 2016; Eskola et al., 2009; Kauravaara, 2013). However, in the case of exercising by personal training, motivation towards desired physical appearance has been highlighted over health, for its practice (Church et al., 2010; Dail et al., 2011). Correspondingly, in the cases of PT customers, the main reasons of purchase have been noticed as desired physical changes, such as weight loss or muscle gain. Additionally, physical problems and injuries have been stated as one common reason to hire a PT, but not as the main one. (Kela & Kyöstäjä, 2015) In this study health was a theme referred to by a higher extent than physical appearance, in the beginning of personal training. Therefore, this can also be one element worth giving attention to, when both offering and completing personal training for customers with a background of physical inactivity.

7.2.2 Physical appearance, change and happiness

Continuing from the previous discussion, physical appearance emerged as a common reason to begin personal training, shared by three participants.

"Losing weight [reason for purchase], and then of course get that athleticism." "Laihtuminen [syy ostoon] ja sit tietysti atleettisuuden hakeminen." Laura

"A side result was to be happy with how I looked, so that also." "Sivutuloks oli se, että on siihen ulkonäköönsä myös tyytyväinen, se myös." Kate

"I wanted to lose weight, decrease those health risks." "Halusin pudottaa painoa. Saada ne terveystermit laskemaan." Sara

The changes longed for in appearances were brought up as weight loss, gained muscle and athleticism. As discussed in the previous chapter, physical appearance has been presented as a main motivation behind personal training, in previous studies. However, in this study, the overall commonality sets it as the third most important reason from five. In this case, Laura was the only participant, who stated physical appearance as the most important motivation to begin the training. Finally, the need of change and perceived happiness was the last theme behind the common reasons and motivations to begin personal training.

- "At that time, I didn't really feel happy in any way. So, maybe that, especially unconsciously." "Silloin ei välttämättä muutenkaan ollut mikään hirveän iloinen fiilis. Niin, ehkä se, varsinkin alitajuisesti." Peter

- "Was it a need?" "Joo, eli se oli se tarve?" Interviewer

- "Yes." "Niin." Peter.

"I didn't look at anything [PTs]. At that point, when a person is totally down. I went there, and got so much out of myself... I opened that door and went. The receptionist told me, she had listened to me, that go to this PT." "En mä mitään katellut [PT:tä]. Siinä vaiheessa, kun ihminen on aivan down. Menin sinne ja sain itsestäni niin paljon... minä avasin sen oven ja menin. Vastaanottohenkilö sanoi minulle, hän kun on minua kuunnellut, niin mene tämän PT:n luokse." Mary

"I was at home really a lot, spinning around the baby, around the pregnancy... At that time, when I was thinking about the gym thing I felt, that I can't deal with this anymore. I have to think of something, to get away from here, sometimes." "Tosi paljon pyörin kotona, vauvan ympärillä, raskauden ympärillä... Musta oikeastaan, kun mietin sitä salihommaa. Tuntui, etten mä kestä enää tätä. Mun on pakko keksiä joku juttu, että pääsee pois täältä välillä." Sara

Since changing life habits were constantly apparent in all interviews, considering the nature of this research and the background of the participants, adjusting an exact number to the theme is challenging as a specific motivation to begin personal training. It has been supported, that

acknowledging the need of change is usually the leading step towards considering the purchase of a PT (Kela & Kyöstäjä, 2015). Regardless of whether the participants separated the need of change as a single motivation to begin their training, it came across through the surrounding negative elements belonging to the experienced physical inactivity (i.e. poor health), which they again wanted to transform.

7.2.3 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in the beginning of personal training

The last issue to consider from the starting point of exercise and personal training was, whether extrinsic or intrinsic motivations had activated the participants. Returning to read through the responses, I separated the participants in two groups at their starting point; those purely extrinsically motivated (Mary, Laura) and both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated (Sara, Peter, Kate). Rehearsing back to Deci and Ryan (2000), extrinsically motivated behavior preforms towards gaining outer benefits, not to provide inner pleasure or satisfaction (chapter 5.2.1). Matching clear extrinsic motivation, Laura had stated, that the reason she began her training was to lose weight and find athleticism. Therefore, all goals at her starting point were designed to support the aimed changes in her physic. Likewise, Mary had discussed her “hate” towards exercising and had had no desire to begin the activity itself. The outer impact forcing training in her life was the experienced crash in health, an ultimate low point, from which she wanted to recover from.

Opposite to extrinsic motivation, intrinsically motivated behavior is performed for personal pleasure, challenge, fun or learning, as long as it provides inner satisfaction independent from outer demands or goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The second group included intrinsic motivations in addition to the extrinsic, effecting their decision to begin the training. Peter had mentioned a need of “happiness” and felt that hiring a positive PT could support this along with a positive change to his life. Sara mentioned having always dreamt of going to the gym as a hobby and somehow knowing that she would really enjoy it. Therefore, weight training had felt appealing for years, yet Sara expressed lacking courage to take action until hiring her PT. Kate had purchased 26 sessions for her will of learning and internalizing gym behavior, aiming to continue the training independently in the future.

Worth noticing is, that in the second group the decision to hire a PT had also been effected by outer elements and goals. As previously discussed, the need to change the experienced health status had affected all participants. Additionally, longed changes in physical appearance had

been mentioned by Sara and Kate. Therefore, it is concluded that no participant in this study had started their training from purely intrinsic motivation.

7.3 Discovered benefits and motivations behind long-term exercise maintenance

This chapter will continue answering the second research question, examining how the initial motivations for personal training and exercise had changed (chapter 7.2.3), after the participants had maintained its practice. It is worth mentioning, that Kate was the only participant to have continued exercising independently for nine months, after ending her one-year PT purchase, due to its cost.

The first issue to mention, regarding the given reasons and motivations to exercise, was their noticeable increase. Therefore, the variety of benefits and motivations the participants found to why they were exercising at the time of our discussion, comparing to what they had recalled from having before starting the training, was noticeably larger. Naturally, this aspect can be criticized by the assumption of simply better memorization of the present than the past. However, the case remained the same for every participant, in both the numerical amount of given motivations and benefits, as well as their experienced relatedness (Figure 5), for why this issue is included as one part of the results.

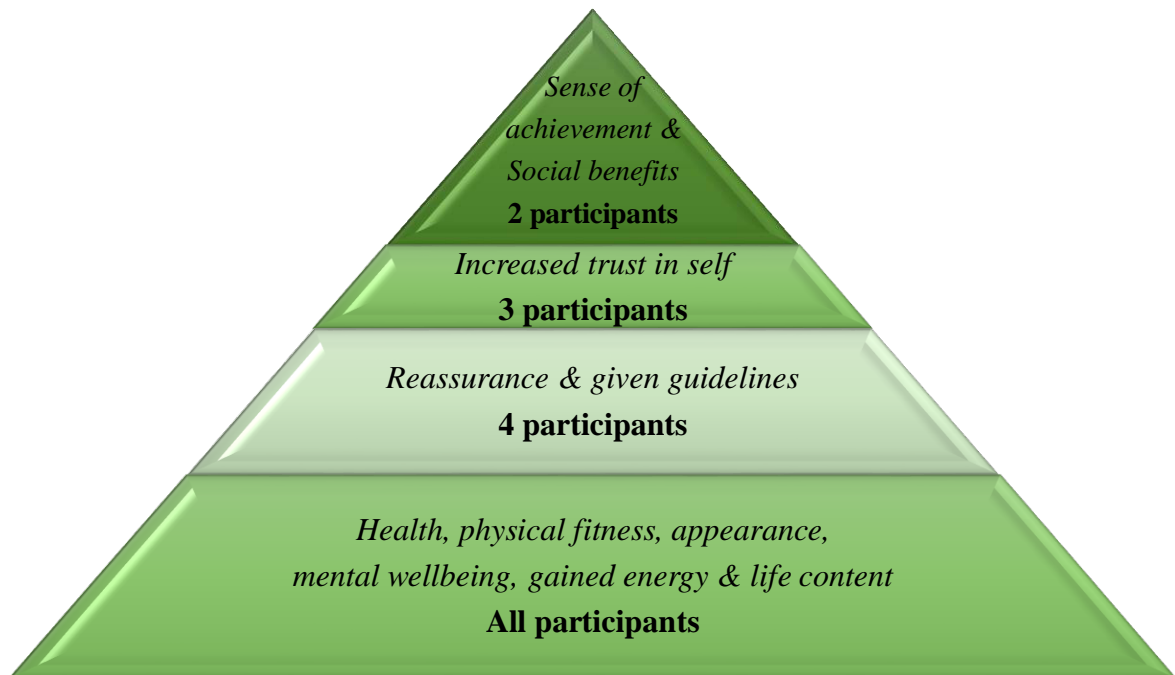
“I’m a lot more active in my daily life. My mind is more awake. Then, my confidence has risen really a lot. That has a really significant meaning. Also, I look entirely different.”
“Oonhan mä paljon aktiivisempi arjessa. Mieli on paljon virkeämpi. Sitten, mun itsetunto on noussut tosi paljon. Sillä on ollut siihen tosi iso merkitys oikeasti. Sitten, oonhan mä ihan eri näköinenkin. Sara

Worth noticing here is, that the Transtheoretical model (TTM) assumes “pros” to increase and “cons” to decrease (chapter 5.1.1), throughout the progression from contemplation to maintenance, that is, from beginning a behavior, to over six months of its maintenance (Evers et al., 2015; Disman et al., 2011). In this sense, the memorized experiences supported the hypothesized increase of “pros”, during the course of practicing the exercise behavior. Analyzing the assumed decrease of “cons” (costs), as well as “temptations” (negative urges endangering relapse, chapter 5.1.1) is challenging, not being the focus point of discussion; the participants preferred talking about the positive sides of exercise. However, when questioned, several mentioned costs and temptations were the lack of energy to train, difficulty of training alone, muscle soreness, difficulty of leaving to train and limited time at use. Therefore,

negative sides of exercise were acknowledged during the interviews, however in smaller amounts and having clearly less emphasis on the participants behavior, comparing to their perceived barriers towards exercise during physical inactivity (chapter 7.1).

When analyzing the reasons to why the participants were continuously exercising, I found that similarly to the cases of the previous issues, no single motivation or reason could be emphasized over the others. Rather, the participants effortlessly brought up multiple motivations and changes they sensed from their being, linked with each other.

Figure 5: Motivations and reasons for long-term exercise maintenance



The following chapters will briefly review the found benefits and motivations from the course of maintaining the exercise behavior, after its starting point. Finally, the motivational change is reflected upon the extrinsic and intrinsic categorization. It should be mentioned that at times, the separation between benefits and motivations of exercising can be challenging, and will therefore be also discussed further for this study in chapter 7.3.4.

7.3.1 Improvements in health, energy, life content, physical changes and mental wellbeing

During the time of the held interviews, health, increased energy, physical changes, gained life content and mental wellbeing were benefits, which all participants introduced to affect their ongoing exercising experience.

"One thing, which brought some sense to this, was how the situations have changed. When you are alone, in a big house with land and you notice that actually, this isn't at all such a heavy burden. The logs move from one place to the next. I was doing everything in our house, it has three floors. I started this of in the beginning of the year, from the point where I couldn't go upstairs. I couldn't even carry a 1,5 litre bottle of Vichy in my hands, because I didn't have the strength to do that." "Se, mikä toi semmoista, että hei tässä on jotain järkeä oli se, kun tilanteet on muuttunut. Kun sä yksin oot, iso talo ja isoja tiluksia pidät, ja huomaat, että eihän tää ookaan niin raskasta. Puut siirtyy paikasta toiseen. Puuhasin kaikkea, meillä on kolmikerroksinen talo. Mä lähdin tähän kaikkeen vuoden alussa siitä, että mä en pystynyt nousemaan alakerrasta ylös. En pystynyt kantamaan edes puolentoista litran Vichy pulloa käsissä, koska mulla ei ollut voimaa tehdä sitä." Mary

"It [exercise] is the best possible help for depression." "Se [liikunta] on kaikkein paras apu masennukseen." Kate

"Ok, you have noticed that?" "Okei, eli olet huomannut sen?" Interviewer

"Yes. It's like, even if you feel like I'd rather cut my feet off than go and exercise in that moment, afterwards the feeling is unbelievably great and lasts a really long time. It's still like that during the next day... of course, the happiness towards myself is then also, which really does me well." "Joo, kyllä. Se on just se, että vaikka sillä hetkellä tuntuisi, että mieluummin leikkaan mun jalat irti kun lähdän liikkumaan, niin ihan heti liikunnan jälkeen fiilis on uskomattoman hyvä ja se kestää tosi kauan, se hyvä fiilis. Se on seuraavana päivänäkin vielä semmoinen... on kanssa tietysti tyytyväisyys itteensä, mikä tekee tosi hyvää." Kate

"My aerobic fitness is much better. Then, my posture is fixed. Also, I've had a stiff back for a really long time. It has become so much better. You don't necessarily even realize it, now, when there is no pain. I have kind of forgotten about it." "Paljon parempi kestävyyskunto. Sit, asentovirheitä on korjattu. Mulla oli ihan älyttömän pitkään selkä jumissa. Se on parantunut huomattavasti. Sitä ei välillä edes tajua enää, kun ei oo sitä kipua, sen on vähän niin kuin unohtanut." Peter

"I don't feel so tired anymore. Even if you don't sleep that well, you still have more energy, compared to what it was when there was that sugar coma and everything. Much better now." "Ei ole niin vetelä olo. Vaikka nukkuisi huonosti, niin silti on enemmän energiaa, mitä verrattuna siihen kun oli semmoinen sokerikooma ja kaikki. Kyllä se on huomattavasti parempi nyt." Laura

These mentioned motivations have been acknowledged in previous studies, to impact exercising behavior. Komulainen (2016), analyzed the experiences which six participants had in the course of practicing fitness and weight-training from one to ten years, in her master's thesis. She found all themes of health, energy, athleticism and overall wellbeing recognizable in her participants' narratives, becoming stronger during the course of their lifestyle and practicing the sport.

Likewise, Bauman et al. (2012), found health status to being one of the clearest correlates to physical activity. Church et al. (2010) found, that PT customers placed the most prominent value on physical outcomes, such as weight loss, strength, advancement and rehabilitation of

old injuries. In this case, psychological outcomes were “closely linked” with the physical. For example, feeling better about oneself and sensing an increase in energy levels were relatable with this study. However, the results in this study don’t separate physical outcomes as the highest valued or most motivating, since several participants clearly stated to give higher appreciation on the surrounding benefits.

“The most important thing probably is, that the health risks have decreased.” “Ne terveysriskit on pienentynyt, tai ne sairastumisriskit. Se on ehkä ykkönen.” Sara

“I haven’t had any goals during this. Just that damn good feeling about... The feeling, that you are capable of doing.” “Ei mulla mitään tavoitteita tässä ole ollut. Se vain, se pirun hyvä fiilis siitä... Se tunne, että sä jaksat tehdä jotain.” Mary

“The psychological side is bigger [meaningful] for me.” “Kyllä mulle suurempi [merkittävämpi] on se psyykinen puoli.” Kate

Returning back to Komulainen (2016), similar viewpoints were brought up by the long-term fitness and weight-training participants. She found, that after one to ten years of constant training the participants discussed their wishes for physical transformation, but didn’t find them as something which would have sustained motivation towards the sport through the years, by themselves. In the case of her study, health, mental wellbeing, confidence, goal-orientation, strength and success were several other issues brought up as motivating factors, along with the physical outcomes. Another element, which all participants related with in this study, was how they found training to provide them content in their current lives. During the course of discussion, the personal importance exercise had for them, was often described as “my thing”, “my time” or a hobby, which the participants had lacked in the past.

“I have something in this life. Other than a big dog and being with him.” “Mulla on jotain tässä elämässä, muutakin kuin iso uroskoira ja sen kanssa oleminen.” Mary

“This is a really nice hobby. I don’t really have a lot of any other hobbies.” “On tuo nyt erittäin mukava harrastus. Ei mulla muita harrastuksia ihan hirveästi ole.” Peter

“Just that, it is my own free time. It does me well. If I’m here at home during the days, with the kids, cooking, collecting toys... I can just throw those home thoughts away. I can be by myself and do what I want to do” “Just niin, että se on mun vapaa-aikaa. Kyllähän se tekee hyvää. Että, jos mä oon tässä päivät kotona lasten kanssa, teen ruokaa, kerään leluja... Saa heittää ne kotiajatukset muualle. Saa olla itsekseen, tehä mitä ite haluaa.” Sara

Laura had directly described an absence of life content during physical inactivity, lacking any hobbies during her free time. Regarding this past phase, she described her life as “lame” and “not really being a life at all”. After adapting exercising in her daily routines, she also found training to become “her own thing”, personal time and space.

“It eased everything. No matter how busy you are otherwise, when you go to train, you can empty your mind for that time. You don’t have to think about what’s going on at work or anything else. It doesn’t matter anymore. It is that 60 to 90 minutes of my own time. It has been so, and is that right now, the little time out, in the middle of my daily life.” “Se helpotti kaikkeen muuhun. Vaikka ois miten hädelläi muuten, kun käyt salilla, vähäksi aikaa pää tyhjenee. Ei tarvii miettiä, mitä töissä on meneillään tai mitään muuta... Sillä ei ole mitään väliä enää. Se on se tunti-puoltoista omaa aikaa. Kyllä se on sekä silloin,, että nykypäivänä sama, se pieni aikalisa arjen puurtamisen keskelle.” Laura

Kate gave significant meaning on how exercising had impacted her entire life quality through multiple aspects. Therefore, I decided this to relate enough on her overall life content, for instance, by her statements on how she had gained her life-, as well as herself back, through exercising.

“Many of those close to me have described, what happened then. Like, I would have woken up. Of course, when you weren’t in constant pain and then the really positive effects it had on my psyche. I got myself back, my life back, the joy in life, back. This kind of hope. All of it. This was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.” “Monet läheiset on kuvaillut, tapahtui silloin. Ihan kun oisin herännyt jostain horroksesta. Tietysti, kun ei jatkuvasti ollut kipua ja psyykelle teki älyttömän hyvää. Se oli ihan kerta kaikkiaan. Sain itseni takaisin, elämäni takaisin, elämän ilon, takas. Semmoisen toiveikkuuden. Kaiken tämän. Se oli yksi elämäni parhaimmista päätöksistä” Kate

Carless and Douglas (2010) have supported, that in addition to physical benefits, a sports activity can provide further meaning or purpose, experienced personal control and constancy in life. Likewise, exercising providing a sense of life content was also noticeable in the study by Komulainen (2016), through the participants’ expected feeling of uncertainty and emptiness, if their sport would be taken away from them. In itself, the impact which sport had on the life content of the participants belonging to this study became apparent to them throughout the course of practicing their training, therefore not expected before its beginning.

Comparing the starting point of the participants’ training to how it’s meaning evolved by its practice, the motivations everybody related with transformed and multiplied through time. While the new element of gained energy and life content were discovered by every participant, the emphasis on physical fitness and mental wellbeing increased to a point, in where everyone found relatedness. Health maintained its position, while the need of outer help and guidance from a PT had slightly decreased, as Kate continued her training independently.

7.3.2 Reassurance and given guidelines

After continuing personal training from around one to two years, four of the five participants felt a need to maintain the outer guidance. Therefore, Kate was the only participant, who had progressed to train without a PT for the past nine months from the interview. However, she mentioned, that if the service price would drop, she would gladly return to train with a PT. Partly this need of guidance reflects to the discussion in chapter 7.1.1, regarding the uncertainty of the ability to maintain the achieved training- and diet routines without the help of a PT. It is also important to understand, that the nature of the needed guidance did also change, feeding new motivation of reaching specific aims, development, learning and diverse training, which the participants had become to enjoy. For instance, during the start of her training, Sara had described a straightforward need for help to change her physical condition and risky health status she found herself in. As she succeeded to lose weight and decrease her health risks, other aims began to replace the original ones.

“And now I’ve started to feel like. When some fat has gone, muscles started to appear and so on... now I feel, that maybe next something like muscle gaining. A bit towards that direction.”
“Ja nyt sitten itsestä alkanut tuntumaan. Kun on vähän läskiä lähtenyt tuosta ja lihakset alkanut erottua ja muuta niin... nyt tuntuu, että ehkä seuraavaksi lihaksen kasvatusta. Vähän siihen suuntaan.” Sara

Likewise, Mary had conquered the point, in which her health had collapsed. Initially “hating” exercise, she discovered its positive sides and gained motivation from her constant and comprehensive development, which she wanted to continue through the diversity of personal training. Correspondingly, Peter was motivated to maintain the intensity and versatility he had found from the received guidance. Laura had succeeded to lose weight, being her main goal throughout her entire experience. However, she didn’t feel ultimate success in reaching the desired physic yet. Similarly to the others, Laura also brought up the value she found in the given guidelines and versatility of her ongoing training.

”Also when we do new exercises, what I might not... like some combinations, what I wouldn’t even think about. There have been some moves, which I didn’t ever know of. When there come these new things, you maintain your interest better. I know how to make some training programs, but when there is someone else, you don’t have to think about anything, when you are told what to do. You just do it. That is the bliss for me, I don’t have to think about it. I’m being told and I do it. It’s great.”
“Myöskin, kun tehdään uusia liikkeitä, mitä en ehkä ite... jotain yhdistelmiä vaikka, mitä ei kävisi mielessäkkään. On ollut jotain liikkeitä, mistä en yksinkertaisesti koskaan tiennytkään. Kun tulee uusia liikkeitä ja kaikkea, mielenkiinto pysyy paremmin yllä. Osaan itsekin jotain treeniohjelmia tehdä, mut sit kun on joku toinen, sun ei tarviä ajatella mitään, kun sulle vaan sanotaan. Sä vaan teet. Se on se autuus mun mielestä, ei tarviä mieltiä. Mulle sanotaan ja mä teen. Se on tosi hieno asia. Laura

"The more personal the service, the more you want to continue. Comparing to, what I've sometimes seen in a gym, that the trainer is just reading the amount of sets and repetitions from some notebook. But my PT will give them spontaneously. She can see from me, what the right amount is and doesn't read it from some paper." *"Mitä henkilökohtaisempaa palvelua niin varmasti haluaa jatkaa. Jos on vain semmoista, mitä on välillä nähnyt salilla, että luetaan vaan vihosta sarjojen kestot ja määrät. Mut just hän [PT] heittää lennosta monta toistoa tehdään. Se näkee musta, mikä on se oikea määrä, eikä lue sitä jostain lapusta."* Peter

Concluding from the participants' descriptions towards their personal training, its versatility and individuality were highly and commonly appreciated characteristics. Supported by Church et al. (2010), their results presented customers' appreciation on the PT's understanding of personal capabilities and using this limit to maximize the intensity of a training session. Further on, skill to design creative workouts, acknowledging their interests and needs supported the maintenance of customer interest. (Church et al., 2010) Also noted by EHFA (2011), understanding individual characteristics (i.e. motivation, barriers, goal achievement), their change throughout training as well as the adaptability and variety of planning exercise programs are all expected from PTs. These aspects were clearly brought up in the completed interviews of this study, giving a view on what the profession of a PT is expected to be, from the customer perspective.

7.3.3 Increasing trust towards the self, sense of achievement and social benefits

A noticed change in increasing trust towards their physical capability to perform different exercises (self-efficacy) and overall self-confidence were brought up by Mary, Peter and Sara.

"I would say, that my self-confidence has risen. I also notice from my general condition, that it is easy to just hop up those stairs. That also generates this good feeling." *"Kyllä mä sanoisin, että itseluottamus on noussut ja huomaa tuon yleiskunnon, että on helppo nopeasti vaan ripaista nuo rappuset ylös. Siitäkin tulee sit semmoista hyvää fiilistä."* Peter

"I will now go to the forest and not fall down. Like, when I didn't have any strength and my background is what it is... That itself would motivate anyone!" *"Menen mettään ja pysyn siellä pystyssä. Kun ei ole ollut voimia ja tausta on mikä on... niin kyllähän se jo motivoi tyhmempääkin!"* Mary

Despite Sara having stated a lack of confidence regarding her capability to continue maintaining the achieved exercise- and diet routines without a PT (chapter 7.1.1), she also mentioned that personal training had led to a strengthened self-confidence and self-esteem, which her peers had also noticed.

Confidence of the ability to exercise in various situations (self-efficacy) has been acknowledged to connect clearly with its ongoing practice (Bauman et al., 2012; Courneya et al., 2008). The improvement of self-confidence has been presented as a beneficial outcome from personal training (Church et al., 2010). Likewise, increasing confidence has been recognized throughout the course of constancy in a sport (Komulainen, 2016). However, it can be unclear whether self-confidence is categorized as a motivation towards- or a benefit of exercising, unless this is clearly emphasized (as in the case of Mary). Considering the literature previously presented, the increase of self-confidence can be seen more as an outcome of, rather than a motivation to exercise.

In addition to the discussed increase of self-confidence, -trust and -efficacy, Mary and Kate highlighted a sense of achievement, which had an impact to how they experienced the achieved changes.

“Now I’ll say something silly. I know, that I’m really good. Not in sports, but physically, I’m in an awesome condition. Being physically active has had an impact on my health, entirely. I’m extremely proud about that. I’m really puzzled of my results, how much a person can... This is the pride talking now, sometimes you have to be proud about yourself... So, how much muscle I have, and how much less fat. Everything. An overall impact on my entire figure.”
“Nytpä sanon jotain ihan hölmöä. Mä tiedän, että mä oon ihan hitsin hyvä. Ei nyt liikunnallisesti, mutta fyysisesti, olen sairaan hyvässä kunnossa. Sillä liikkumisella on ollut vaikutusta mun, tietyllä tavalla terveyteen. Sellaiseen kokonaisvaltaiseen. Oon älyttömän ylpeä siitä. Tuloksista olin äärimmäisen hämmäntynyt, että kuinka paljon ihmiselle on... tää on sitä ylpeyttä nyt, ihmisen täytyy joskus nostaa oma häntänsä ylös. Niin, et kuinka paljon lihasmassaa on. Kuinka paljon vähemmän rasvaa. Kaikkea. Kokonaisvaltainen merkitys mun kokonaiskoostumukseen.” Mary

“My health has improved, even though I’m sometimes sick. My mood is much better. The happiness towards myself is significantly better, as well as the happiness towards my own body. Even though, before the medication I was really slim and somebody might say, that I looked better at that time. But, I’m still happier now, because I’ve done something about it. My psyche is the biggest thing.”
“Terveys on parantunut, vaikka nyt sairastelen. Mieliala on paljon parempi. Tyytyväisyys itseen on ihan tähtitieteellisellä tavalla parantunut. Ja kanssa sit se tyytyväisyys omaan kehoon. Vaikka silloin, ennen kun mulla oli ne lääkkeet, niin olin ihan äärimmäisen hoikka, niin joku saattaisi sanoa, että olin silloin paremman näköinen. Niin oon silti nyt tyytyväisempi, koska oon tehnyt sen asian eteen jotain. Psyhyke on se suurin.”
 Kate

Finally, Sara and Kate were the two participants to discuss social benefits found from the gym environment, also playing a part in their motivation to go training.

“Despite of going to train without a training buddy, I like the gym I go to. People say hi to you really often. It is a small gym, with the same people one evening after the other. It’s really nice to go there. A bit like belonging to the group.”
“Vaikka meen sinne salille sillain, että mulla ei siinä treenikaveria ole. Tykkään tuosta meidän salista, missä mä käyn. Siellä on tosi

paljon... ihmiset moikkailee. Se on pikkuinen sali, samat naamat pyörii illasta toiseen. Sinne on tosi mukava mennä. Vähän niin kuin kuuluu joukkoon.” Sara

Social benefits (i.e. developed relationships within the gym community) have been previously uplifted as aspects making personal- and weight training an overall better experience (Church et al., 2010; Komulainen, 2016). Perhaps, the role of social benefits would have been more apparent in this study, if they had been specifically questioned. Nevertheless, my approach was to discuss those benefits and motivations which the participants’ themselves spontaneously presented as personally important.

”When I think about the experiences I have heard from others. Maybe the PTs could be more courageously themselves. A few have had that feeling, that this proper relationship isn’t born because the PT is too restraint and totally focused on this [training]. What I enjoyed was, that we could just talk about things sometimes. That it became, although we were exercising, there came this trustful feeling and then that created the situation that it was nice to go there, I waited to go. When I think of these two others, they didn’t have it so, that it would have been nice to go there just for the PT. I had it.” “Jos mietin, muiden kokemuksia, oon kuullut. Ehkä PT:t saisi olla rohkeammin omia itseään. Parillakin on ollut sellaista tunnetta, että semmoinen kunnon suhde jää syntymättä sen takia, että PT on liian pidättyväinen ja täysin tähän [treenaamiseen] fokuoitunut. Se, mistä mä tykkäsin, oli se, että pystyttiin juttelemaan ihan niitä näitä välillä. Että, siinä tuli semmoinen, vaikka me oltiin liikkumassa. Siinä tuli luottavainen olo ja sitten se teki kanssa sen, että siellä oli kiva käydä. Sitä odotti. Sitä taas ei näillä kahdella, mitä mietin, niillä ei ole sellaista ollut. Että pelkästään PT:nkin takia olisi kiva mennä. Mulla oli se.” Kate

It should still be noticed that the relationship with the PT had been constantly mentioned by most participants, giving a sense of the importance given to the person behind the profession. However, the other participants didn’t describe it as a specific reason to attend their training, or as a personal benefit gained from it.

7.3.4 Concluding the motivational transformation

In order to conclude the discussion considering the personal importance of exercise for the participants, the change between the motivations to exercise before the start and during maintenance is presented in table 4. As can be noticed, the sense of achievement has been left out from the later stage. The reason for this being, that from my point of view, it was used to describe the outcomes (benefits) of the change as well as its experience, rather than as a motivation determining continuance or attendance. Therefore, the listed had been either described as motivations or as personally important reasons, affecting the participants’ choices to continue their exercise participation.

Table 4. Transformed motivations towards exercise

Motivations to begin personal training/exercise	Motivations to continue personal training/exercise
Physical appearance (extrinsic)	Physical fitness (extrinsic/intrinsic)
Health (extrinsic)	Health (extrinsic)
Reassurance to achieve training routines (extrinsic)	Guidance; supporting development & versatility (extrinsic/intrinsic)
Learning (intrinsic)	Mental wellbeing (intrinsic)
Need of change (intrinsic)	Life content (intrinsic)
	Energy (intrinsic)
	Increasing self-confidence (intrinsic)
	Social benefits (extrinsic)

While both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (chapter 5.2.1) are present in both stages, it is noticed that the emphasis of extrinsic motivation shifted to intrinsic motivation throughout the course of time. Likewise, the meaning of single motivations transformed. While physical appearance was described as an outer, desired change (of i.e. weight loss) before the start of the training, the improved physical fitness provided feelings such as strength, coping and satisfaction for the participants, along with the desire to continue the improvement. Likewise, the needed training guidance changed from outer reassurance of the participants' capability to begin exercising to a more spontaneously driven need to develop, maintain training versatility and intensity, providing pleasure and being something to look forward to, during leisure time.

- *“How do you usually feel like, when you are going there [training]?” “Minkäläinen fiilis sulla yleensä on, kun sä menet sinne [treenaamaan]?” Interviewer*

- *“Like, usually rather expecting.” “Semmoinen, yleensä aika odottava.” Sara*

- *“What are you waiting for?” “Mitä sä odotat?” Interviewer*

- *“Well, what I can do this time. Whether I'm able to lift up the weights. Have I improved, who is there and... it is nice.” “No, että mitähän tällä kertaa saa tehtyä. Saakohan nostettua painoja. Onko tullut edistystä, ketä siellä salilla sattuu olemaan ja... se on mukavaa.” Sara*

“An enormous role [the training] in how I experienced exercise, myself and the accomplishments in that exercise. Training with a PT became what I looked forward to the most of all.” “Ja sitten aivan käsittämättömän suuri rooli [treenaamisella] siinä, miten mä koin liikunnan, itseni ja ne onnistumiset siitä liikunnasta. PT:n kanssa treenaamisista tuli se, mitä mä kaikista eniten odotin.” Kate

The increase of intrinsic motivation seen throughout the course of practicing exercise has been supported by previous studies. Buckworth et al. (2007) examined the change of motivations through the stages of change in college students. It was found, that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were the lowest during contemplation (combined with precontemplation), and highest in the stage of maintenance (chapter 5.1). Partially corresponding, extrinsic motivation was found greater during the stages of contemplation and preparation, while intrinsic motivation strengthened significantly during action and maintenance. (Buckworth et al., 2007) As can be seen, I haven't separated the found motivations between all the stages, but the comparison has been made between the contemplation and action/maintenance stages for this study.

Further on, intrinsic motivation has been noticed to best predict long-term exercise constancy, while extrinsic motivation has been suggested to predict initial and short-term exercise adoption (Carraça et al., 2012). Likewise, intrinsic motivation has been seen to effect positively on task-persistence, interest towards and once again, regularity in exercise participation. However, it should also be noticed, that a large overall amount of practiced exercise isn't intrinsically motivated, since it is not an activity everyone enjoys, especially in the phases of adoption. (Blanchard et al., 2003) Therefore, it should be reminded, that in general people react against very different reasons and motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that intrinsic motivation is the answer for achieving long-term exercise maintenance, since some may practice this for purely extrinsic reasoning. However, this study does support the increasing role of found intrinsic motivations, supporting the intention and will to exercise constantly on a long-term basis.

7.4 Successful and unsuccessful elements experienced from personal training

Previous to proceeding for the final chapter in this study, I will conclude the role which the participants gave for their personal training and personal trainer (PT) in their overall experience. Firstly, the role which the PT had during this course of change was described as a teacher, coach, lifesaver, guide and friend. Additionally, trustworthiness, approachability and sensing the individual needs and limits of customers were seen important. The participants appreciated individuality and versatility in their training (at times providing an element of surprise), feeling them to support the motivation for continuance. Other issues in which they

found the training successful were encouragement to enter the gym environment, providing them confidence to train and a feeling of accountability regarding their training and diet routines.

Several participants wished their PT to be stricter towards them, requiring more effort in their training as well as from surrounding elements such as their diet and rest habits. Likewise, closer monitoring within the process towards set goals was wished for, by an increasing the amount of milestones. The high prices of the service were brought up, in which cases ideas of improvement were to offer more variety in the training times (i.e. shorter sessions) or including separately payed services, such as body composition measurements to the training, if the prices couldn't be lowered. An offered variety on the training sessions' timing (i.e. both day- and evening hours) were also wished for. It should still be mentioned, that all participants were satisfied with their PT and training programs, partially making the suggestions of improvement challenging to require.

8. DISCUSSION

This study evaluated the behavioral transformation which five participants had experienced, on their way from physical inactivity to constant exercise on a long-term basis. The used interview base (appendix 3) successfully supported the memorization of a large variety of detailed barriers along with past situations, influencing the decisions to avoid exercise during physical inactivity. The recognized barriers included both those commonly encountered (i.e. lack of motivation, old habits) as well as more rarely occurring (i.e. social anxiety, negative experiences from school sports) issues, from sport and exercise research on the adult population. Further on, the emphasis which self-efficacy has on exercise participation was supported, again majorly referred to in the field of sports psychology (Bauman et al., 2012; Biddle & Mutrie, 2008; Carraça et al., 2012). Consideration of the recognized barriers and their adaptation to future research are further discussed in chapter 8.4.

In terms of the motivational transformation, differences between initial motivations to begin exercise and those to continue its maintenance were distinguished. While none of the participants were solely intrinsically motivated to begin their exercise, the importance of intrinsic motivation increased throughout the experience to a point, in which the dominant role to exercise motivation shifted from extrinsic to intrinsic, finding correspondence with previous research (Buckworth et al., 2007; Carraça et al., 2012). However, both motivational types were identified in the stages of contemplation and maintenance, and both increased in both numeral amount and relatedness during the practiced exercise. Therefore, it should still be mentioned that as individuals act upon different reasons, no single motivational type can be concluded to predict exercise maintenance as itself.

Reflecting the experiences on the TTM, correspondence was found with self-efficacy and decisional balance, however not including all their aspects. Self-efficacy towards exercising agreed as being the lowest during precontemplation/contemplation and gradually increasing towards the steps of exercise maintenance. However, this increase was very slow, several participants showing uncertainty of their capability to maintain exercise routines alone, up to two years of practice. (Dishman et al., 2011; Evers et al., 2015) In this sense, it is suggested that the increase of self-efficacy would remain subtle in the stage of maintenance, offering room for development in the timely stage of termination, which again has been suggested to begin from five years of practicing a behavior (chapter 5).

The benefits of exercising clearly increased, while the costs remained to exist in the participants' acknowledgment, who chose to give significantly more value on the strengthening benefits. Therefore, the decisional balance agreed to some extent with the theory, however the role of costs should have been analyzed with more detail to provide a comprehensive understanding of their hypothetical decrease throughout the timely stages. (Blissmer et al., 2015; Dishman et al., 2011; Evers et al., 2015) It is also worth mentioning, that temptations endangering relapse from progressing in a practiced behavior didn't appear as relevant in the results of this study. All participants recalled having remained increasingly motivated to practice and develop their training throughout the experience, therefore avoiding missing any of their set sessions.

It is noticed, that socioeconomic differences have been included in differentiating the exercise behavior of people, as higher education, profession and income are related with more leisure-time physical activity practiced (Eskola et al., 2009; Kauravaara, 2013; Mäki-Opas, 2016). Correspondingly, the cost of exercise has been previously identified as a common barrier for exercise participation (Borodulin et al., 2016; Special Eurobarometer 412., 2014). This study didn't focus on separating the participants by their socioeconomic status; rather on finding commonalities between those living in very different life stages. Common perceptions towards exercise behavior, motivations and barriers were successfully found between the five participants, consisting of those living employed, as an entrepreneur, a student and on parental leave, not highlighting cost itself as an issue preventing exercise. Nonetheless, the high cost of personal training was mentioned, remaining to be seen as a worthwhile investment. However, it is understandable that everyone with low income can't generally afford to hire a personal trainer, as long as the service remains in its present pricing range.

8.2 Limitations of the research

Several limitations were recognized in the completion of this research. As has been previously mentioned (chapter 6.2.2), using the memorization of past experiences as a source of data is one restriction in presenting all of its occurrences accordingly with detail. Nonetheless, individually following the participants ongoing behavioral change from one to two years wasn't an option to be accomplished during the course of completing this master's thesis, for its timely limits. Therefore, the analyzed experiences had occurred in the near history of the

participants lives, of which the memorization was supported by the interview structure (chapter 6.2.1). Additionally, the results aimed to find commonalities from these experiences of people not being previously acquainted nor aware of who the other participants in this study were, which should reinforce their validity.

The used theory was found to support the understanding of the experiences under analysis. However, for their differing aspects, at times the theoretical areas had to be discussed on a surface level, while moving from one issue to the next; in addition to two behavioral theories I also included previous research from personal training, exercise and physical inactivity habits of the adult population. In this sense, while both behavioral theories did support understanding the experience, they also limited the use of each other. Basically, this made it challenging to analyze deeply either one in this research. Therefore, if the intention had been to prove the applicability of any particular theory to this environment or analyze it more comprehensively in the experience, I would limit the focus on that theory alone.

8.4 Suggestions on future research

Referring slightly back to the discussion on physical inactivity, it is a phenomenon expected to increase in the future years. WHO (2018) has estimated, that over 80% of the global adolescent population is currently insufficiently physically active. The amount is alarming, for the reason that habits internalized during the youth are ones', in many cases, carried through to adulthood (Augustson et al., 2016; Eskola et al., 2009). This in mind, it is assumed that further research in the field of physical inactivity, physical activity, exercise motivations and barriers will continue to be implemented in the future. Therefore, several ideas considering upcoming research are presented as the following.

The barriers to participate in exercise presented issues, which are not often included in research examining the general adult population; the effect of a physically inactive family during their own youth, negative experiences from school sports, social anxiety and low self-efficacy (Eskola et al., 2009; Hart et al., 1989). As mentioned, the impact self-efficacy has on exercise participation has been often discussed in sports psychology (chapter 7.1.1), however it could be given a more meaningful and general role in the overall field of sport and exercise research. Likewise, the influence of a physically inactive family or negative experiences from school sports is generally an issue of focus when researching the exercise habits of the youth

themselves. In this research, two participants clearly emphasized how these experiences from youth may continue to affect perception towards exercise, years and decades in to adulthood.

Continuing onwards, while researching the barriers to exercise participation in adults, the impact of negative experiences or an inactive family during the youth shouldn't be forgotten. Likewise, analyzing the experienced barriers of social anxiety and low self-efficacy towards exercise on a larger scope of those physically inactive would be interesting in terms of discovering the proportion of relatedness. Further on, interviewing of similar nature to this study could be used to discover deeper or more specified issues behind the chosen lifestyles. The more effectively different barriers are recognized and understood for exercise participation, the more realistic it is to take actions towards resolving physical inactivity.

For the reason of the small scope of participants (including one man), gender differences weren't analyzed in the results of this research. Therefore, these differences could be taken in to account in a larger scope, regarding both the motivations of and barriers to exercise. Further on, taking a larger scope of physically inactive participants could be a beneficial approach to finding practical methods of encouraging exercise participation, designing physical activity interventions and promoting exercise in general. Finally, there is the business of personal training, which would benefit from more focus of research. Assumably, partially for the reason, that these participants were long-term PT –customers, negative issues experienced in the training or suggestions of improvement were challenging to find. Therefore, it is likely that contrasting viewpoints could be examined more effectively from short-term PT-customers and be used to develop the business.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Consent Form

Suostumuslomake haastateltavalle

Jyväskylän Yliopisto, Liikuntatieteellinen tiedekunta

Pro gradu – tutkielma:

From inactivity to long-term exercise maintenance through Personal Training

Vähäisestä liikkumisesta aktiiviseksi liikkujaksi PT –palvelun avulla

Ohjaaja: Anna-Katriina Salmikangas

Tutkija: Ruth Lindroos

Tutkimuksen yksilöhaastattelujen tarkoitus on tuottaa tietoa seuraavista tutkimuksen pääaiheista:

1. Muutoksen kokemukseen; vähäisestä liikunnan harrastajasta aktiiviseksi liikkujaksi.
2. Kokemukseen Personal Training (PT) –palvelusta; onnistumisten ja epäonnistumisten myötä sen kehittämis ehdotuksiin.

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista. Yksilöhaastattelujen aikana osallistujilla on oikeus keskeyttää haastattelu, sekä jättää vastaamatta kysyttyyn kysymykseen ilman seuraamuksia. Osallistujat esitetään tutkimuksessa joko nimettöminä tai keksityillä nimillä, ikä ja sukupuoli säilyvät totuudenmukaisina. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan tiedon analysoimista ja tuloksien kirjoittamista varten, joten allekirjoittaessa tämän lomakkeen, haastateltava antaa suostumuksensa myös nauhoituksen toteutukseen.

Kaikki tutkimuksen tiedonkeruuseen liittyvä aineisto säilytetään luottamuksellisesti, ja on ainoastaan tutkijan käytössä. Aineisto tuhoetaan tutkimuksen päättymisen jälkeen asianmukaisesti. Haastateltavalla on oikeus tiedustella tutkimuksen lisätietoja kaikissa sen vaiheissa.

Suostun osallistumaan tutkimukseen:

Allekirjoitus ja päiväys

Nimenselvennys

Minuun saa ottaa yhteyttä tutkimukseen liittyvissä asioissa sen toteutuksen aikana.

Suostumuksen vastaanottaja:

Allekirjoitus ja päiväys

Nimenselvennys

Appendix 2. Interview questions in Finnish

Ylläpitovaihe

1. Kerro, miten treenaat tällä hetkellä? (oma-aloitteista treenausta vai pt:n/muiden määräämää? Kuinka pitkään olet seurannut tämänhetkistä treeniohjelmaasi? Kuinka paljon sinä vaikutit ohjelmaan rakenteeseen (miten), treenit/vk)?
2. Milloin kävit viimeksi treenaamassa? Minkälainen olo sinulla oli hieman ennen treenin aloittamista? (mitä odotit tulevalta treeniltä?)
3. Minkä vuoksi treenaat tällä hetkellä? (psykkiset, sosiaaliset &/ fyysiset syyt)
4. Mitkä ovat sinulle kolme tärkeintä liikunnan kautta saavuttamaasi asiaa. (Koetko, että sinä olet luonut ne vai joku muu (kuka)? Miten ne kehittyivät?)
5. Mitä haittoja tai epämieluisia asioita tulee mieleesi treenaamisesta? Entä valmennuksesta?

Toimintavaihe

1. Minkälainen tavanomainen treeniviikkosi oli x kuussa? (Minkälainen ohjelma sinulla oli, mikäli eri? Noudatitko sitä?)
2. Mitkä olivat treenitavoitteesi tänä aikana? (miten suhtauduit niihin, olitko sinä vai joku muu asettanut ne?)
3. Minkälaisia ajatuksia liikunta herätti sinussa tänä aikana? Entä valmentajasi?
4. Kun olit onnistunut ylläpitämään liikuntaasi x kuukautta, mitä se merkitsi sinulle?
5. Mitkä asiat saivat sinut jatkamaan harjoittelua? (Miten nämä asiat/päätös vaikuttivat sinuun muuten)
6. Miettiessä ensimmäisen x kuukauden harjoittelua, missä asioissa PT oli onnistunut? Entä epäonnistunut?

Harkinta- ja päätöksentekovaihe

1. Kerro niistä asioista, mitkä johtivat päätökseesi palkata PT? (miten päätös vaikutti sinuun?)
2. Kuinka suhtauduit liikuntaan ennen ensimmäistä treenikertaasi? (odotukset)
3. Mitä ominaisuuksia toivoit PT:ltäsi (fyysiset, psyykkiset, sosiaaliset, miksi)? Kuinka valitsit sopivan henkilön?
4. Vastasiko PT odotuksiisi? Miten?
5. Kerro ensimmäisestä treeniohjelmastasi ja -tavoitteistasi. (Jos olisit saanut valita, mitä olisi tehty toisin?)
6. Miltä liikunta alkoi tuntumaan sen aloituksen myötä? (Mitkä asiat aiheuttivat epävarmuutta? Entä onnistumisen tunnetta?)

7. Mikä motivoi sinua osallistumaan treeneihin niiden alkutaipaleella?
8. Miten elämäsi muuttui, kun aloitit liikunnan harrastuksen?

Esiharkintavaihe; vähäinen liikkuminen

1. Kerro elämästäsi silloin, kun et harrastanut liikuntaa? (tavat jne).
2. Kuvaille niitä asioita, mitkä olivat johtaneet liikunnan pois jäämiseen elämässäsi. (Sisäiset & ulkoiset tekijät) Kuinka pitkään liikunnan harrastamattomuus jatkui?
3. Kuinka suhtauduit liikuntaan tänä aikana? (hyödyt ja haitat)
4. Harrastitko lainkaan hyötyliikuntaa? Jos näin, miten/milloin.
5. Mitä mielikuva urheiluun osallistumisesta sai sinut ajattelemaan? (Syyt. Harkitsitko liikkumista (miksi/miksi ei)?)
6. Miten muuten kuvailisit itseäsi tänä aikana?
7. Mitä muuta merkittävää muistat elämästäsi tältä ajanjaksolta? Haluaisitko vielä lisätä jotain olennaista tähän liittyen?

Kokemuksen kertaus ja lisäykset

1. Varmista: Mitkä muutokset kuluneena aikana ovat sinulle merkittävimmät; liikkumattomuus vs. aktiiviliikkuja? (miksi)
2. Millä keinoilla PT vakuutti sinut liikunnan ylläpitoon?
3. Miten kuvailisit hänen roolia sinun elämässäsi kuluneen x kuukauden aikana?
4. Varmista PT:n onnistumiset ja epäonnistumiset + mahd. lisäykset.
5. Oletko kokenut repsahduksia liikunnan ylläpidossa koko tänä aikana? Mistä se johtui?
6. Kuinka PT -palvelua voisi jatkossa parantaa?
7. Miten mielestäsi voisi kannustaa fyysisesti passivoitunutta ihmistä liikunnan aloittamiseen? (esimerkkejä)
8. Haluatko lisätä vielä jotain olennaista?

Appendix 3. Interview questions in English

Maintenance

1. Tell me, how do you currently train? (Who sets the training times? How long have you followed this program for? How much influence did you have on it? Training sessions per week?)
2. When was the last time you worked out? How did you feel about going to your session? (What were you expecting?)
3. For what reasons do you exercise now? (psychological, physical, social)
4. What are the three most important things, you have achieved through exercising? (Do you feel that you have achieved them or somebody else? How did they evolve?)
5. What uncomfortable things can you relate with exercising? How about the personal training?

Action

1. Tell me about your regular training week in x month. (The program, if different, did you follow your program?)
2. What were your training goals at this time? (how did you feel about them, were they set by you or someone else?)
3. How did you feel about exercise at this time? And your trainer?
4. What did the ability to maintain regular exercising for X months mean to you?
5. Why did you choose to continue your training, from this point onwards? (Did this decision have some further effect on you?)
6. When you think about the first X months of your training, what was your PT successful in? And what could of he/she have done better?

Contemplation & Preparation

1. What things had concluded your decision to hire a PT? (How did this influence you?)
2. How did you perceive sports, before attending your first training session? (expectations)
3. What qualities did you expect from your PT (physical, psychological, social, why)? How did you choose your trainer?
4. Did he/she meet your expectations? (How)
5. Tell me about your first program and goals. (If you could have chosen, would you have done something differently?)
6. How did exercising start to feel? (What made you feel accomplishment? And uncertainty?)
7. What motivated you to participate in your training, at the beginning?
8. How did your life change when you began to exercise?

Precontemplation

1. What was your life like, when you didn't exercise? (habits etc.).
2. Describe the issues, which had effected exercise not being a part of your life (inner & outer). How long were you inactive for?
3. What did you think about sports, during this time? (positive and negative)
4. Did you practice any physical activity (i.e. active transportation)? If so, what/when?
5. What did/would have the idea of participating in exercise make you feel? (Reasoning. Did you consider participation (why/why not)?)
6. How else would you describe yourself as during this time (examples)?
7. What other significant matters do you remember from this time? Would you still like to add something?

Rehearsing the experience

1. Reassure the most significant changes during the whole experience.
2. By which methods did your PT convince you to maintain exercise?
3. Overall, how would you describe his/her meaning in your life, during the last X months? (Asking if any other successful/unsuccessful elements would still be added)
4. Have you experienced any relapses in maintaining your training? Why?
5. How could the PT -service be further improved?
6. By which way(s) would you encourage a physically inactive person to begin exercising (examples)?
7. Is there anything, you would still like to add?