

CAE ESSAY WRITING

Topic 1: You have watched a television discussion about methods governments could adopt to encourage people to take more exercise. You have made the notes below.

How can governments encourage people to take more exercise?

- better education
- free facilities
- exercise time at work

Some opinions expressed in the discussion:

'People already know the benefits of exercise but don't do enough about it.'

'Many forms of exercise are free.'

'Employers would benefit from a healthier workforce.'

1. You are given a question, for example " How can governments encourage people to take more exercise?"

2. You are given **3 possible answers in bullet points** :

- better education
- free facilities
- exercise time at work.

3. You need to say **whether you agree or disagree with only two of them.**

If you agree with a bullet point, you present this directly as your opinion. For example you may start a paragraph: "Probably the most important action governments could take would be to introduce an education programme in all schools", which agrees with the suggestion made by the first bullet point. Then you should go on to explain why this action would be effective

If you disagree, first you have to present the bullet point as something other people believe , and then say that you disagree. For example:

State what others believe: "It has been suggested that if exercise facilities were free, there would be an increased public take-up"

Say that you disagree: "In theory, this seems an excellent way of encouraging adults to exercise, but in practice I am doubtful". And then go on to explain why you disagree.

4. You should say **which of the two proposals is more important**. The safest method is to agree with one statement and disagree with the other, as was explained above. Then in the **conclusion**, you will say that only the one method (the one you agree with) must be applied because it will be the most effective.

5. The **introduction** should be a general statement about the topic, the fact that there are different proposed methods and your intention to discuss two of them.

6. **Part of the topic are also three opinions** each relevant to one of the bullet points. In other words, each opinion either agrees or disagrees with the statement of one bullet point (which is what you are asked to do in the essay - but only for two of the bullet points.)

You may adopt these opinions or not. For example the opinion "People already know the benefits of exercise but don't do enough about it" refers to the first bullet point "better education" and obviously disagrees with it. In the discussion above, however, we have taken the opposite point of view, that education would be helpful.

Use these opinions mostly as a means to better understand the bullet points.

Remember that the essay you are going to write should have a **formal style**, while the opinions expressed as part of the topic are informal. So, if you agree with what they state you should adopt a more formal language.

Essay plan

Introduction: Make a general statement about the benefits of exercise and the suggestion that governments should help. Say you are going to discuss two proposals.

Par. 2 : Agree that an education program aimed at students would be effective. It should be supplemented with a programme aimed at adults

Par. 3: It is suggested that there should be more free exercise facilities. Express your disagreement. Walking and cycling are free but people do not use these methods.

Conclusion: An educational programme would be more efficient and cost-effective.

Model Composition

It is generally accepted that people today take insufficient exercise. This, combined with a poor diet, can lead to ill health and a poor quality of life. In view of this, it has been suggested that governments should act to encourage more exercise. I shall consider two of the proposed methods.

Probably the most important action governments could take would be to introduce an education programme into all schools. In addition to publicising the benefits of exercise, this would make exercise a compulsory part of the school curriculum and get young people used to following an exercise regime. In my view, however, for this to be truly successful, there should be a corresponding programme aimed at adults. If parents took part in an exercise programme put on by the school, they would be supporting what their children were being taught.

It has been suggested that if exercise facilities were free, there would be an increased public take-up. In theory, this seems an excellent way of encouraging adults to exercise, but in practice I am doubtful. It is based on the assumption that exercise depends on money, whereas in fact walking and cycling, two very effective ways of keeping fit, are free and can be fitted conveniently into most people's daily routine. Therefore, in my opinion, providing expensive extra facilities is unnecessary and would be a misuse of public money.

In view of the above arguments, I believe governments should introduce education programmes aimed at people of all ages because this is the most cost-effective means of achieving the desired goal.

Coherence (must be logical) and Cohesion (must be well connected)

The reader must be able to follow your thinking easily. If you fail to achieve this goal, you will be penalized with a low mark.

Paragraph level! Each paragraph should have one main idea which is introduced in the topic sentence and supported by the following sentences of the paragraph.

In your writing as a whole: Paragraphs should follow on clearly from each other.

Sentences that guide the reader (usually at the beginning of paragraphs):

I shall consider two of the proposed methods.

Probably the most important action would be...

It has been suggested that...

In view of the above arguments, I believe...

Reference words

This, combined with a poor diet...

In my view, for **this** to be truly successful...

If parents took part, **they** would be supporting what **their** children...

In view of **the above arguments....**

LEXICAL LINKS (SYNONYMS - NEAR SYNONYMS - WORDS FROM THE SAME ROOT)

governments should **act** - the most important **action** governments should take

benefits of **regular exercise** - used to following an **exercise regime**

get **young people** used to following - what **their children** were being taught

a programme aimed at **adults** - if **parents** took part

Linking words and phrases

but, whereas, therefore, because etc.

Task: Write the above essay topic. You should:

1. Disagree that better education would lead to better fitness levels
2. Agree that exercise time at work would be beneficial and consider it the best option.

Before attempting the task you should read the following articles:

1. Why Don't We Do the Things We Know Are Good for Us?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bj-gallagher/why-dont-we-do-the-things_b_409428.html

2. Working Out at Work:

<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/working-out-at-work>

You are expected to read the articles carefully and prove you have done so, using ideas, words and phrases taken from them in your essay. You **SHOULD NOT** copy whole sentences or paragraphs.

1. Why Don't We Do the Things We Know Are Good for Us?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bj-gallagher/why-dont-we-do-the-things_b_409428.html

Mark Twain was a keen observer of human nature - making him a great storyteller, a folksy philosopher, and a moralist for modern times. As we begin 2010 with our lists of resolutions, I'm reminded of Twain's quote: *"To promise not to do a thing is the surest way in the world to make a body want to go and do that very thing."*

Twain wasn't the first to point this out. St. Paul wrote about the same paradox: *"I don't understand myself. I want to do what is right but I do not do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate ... It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what's right, I inevitably do what's wrong."* (Romans 7:15)

What IS it with us humans? Why do we act so contrary to our own self-interest ... and so often?

Our problem isn't lack of information. Bookstores are stocked with countless books about how to eat less and exercise more; dozens of experts advise us to save and invest our money; wise friends warn us to stay away from troublesome lovers. We have plenty of information on getting rid of clutter, managing time, taking care of our bodies, managing our finances, fulfilling our career dreams. But all this information doesn't change our behavior. We know what to do but we still don't do it.

In fact, sometimes we do just the *opposite* of what we know is good for us! We overeat and under-exercise; we spend every last nickel (or more); we pick the wrong partners to fall in love with (again and again). We buy stuff we don't need, procrastinate and fritter away time, neglect our bodies, mismanage our money, and bail out on ourselves in countless ways. If anyone else treated us the way we treat ourselves, we'd be outraged!

Why don't we do the things we know are good for us? And what can we do to change it?

Therapist and author Dr. Pat Allen says, *"The only way you know you love yourself — or anyone else — is by the commitments you are willing to make and keep."* I know this sounds like a cliché, but one of the main reasons we don't keep our resolutions and commitments is that we don't love ourselves. Heck, sometimes we don't even *like* ourselves!

We are our own worst critics — berating ourselves for flaws and foibles. Who among us is not haunted by failings and mistakes? The seven deadly sins of lust, greed, gluttony, sloth, envy, anger and pride are alive and well in all of us — along with fear, resentment, pettiness, gossip, and all the rest. It's hard to love ourselves when we're all-too-aware of our dark sides.

Another reason we also have difficulty acting in our own best interest is because immediate pleasure exerts a stronger influence than concern for long-term health. Chocolate *now* is more appealing than weight loss *later*. A purchase *today* feels more pleasurable than a savings account balance at the end of the month. We Americans, in particular, have a hard time delaying gratification. We want what we want when we want it — *now*.

Additional factors influence our self-care practices: gender issues (women are socialized to put everyone else first); religious traditions (self-sacrifice is seen as a virtue in many religions); family history and lack of good role models also play an important role in shaping our own choices and habits. In short, there is no one reason why we don't do what's good for us — there are many reasons.

So, what's the solution?

Changing a habit is simple — but not easy. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Re-train yourself with love. When I adopted my first dog a few years ago, a friend advised me about training. “Dogs respond best to training with love,” he said, “just like people.” Wise advice. Teaching ourselves new habits works best with it's done lovingly.

Drop “should” and “ought” from your vocabulary. “Should” and “ought” are moralistic, negative words — certain to de-motivate you. Instead of “should” and “ought,” try using “want.” It's a positive word that is more likely to get good results. Example: “I *want* to be fit and trim,” instead of, “I *should* lose weight.” See the difference?

KISS: Keep It Small and Simple. Set yourself up to succeed — set small, achievable goals. Ask yourself, “What three simple things could I do today that would make a positive difference in my life?” Wash your car; clean out one drawer, try fruit instead of candy for snacks, take a walk at lunch. You'll be surprised at how small changes can make a big difference.

No one can do it for you, but you can't do it alone. Ask for help. Get an action buddy, an exercise pal, or someone to keep you company doing things you don't like to do. Consider hiring a personal trainer, a life coach, a professional organizer, a therapist — someone to help you keep your commitments to yourself.

Success is about progress, not perfection. As long as you're moving in the direction you desire, you're successful. Give yourself credit; pat yourself on the back; acknowledge the changes you're making, even if they're tiny changes. Catch yourself doing something right — or, *approximately* right.

As Mark Twain wisely pointed out: “*A habit cannot be tossed out the window. It must be coaxed down the stairs one step at a time.*” Happy New Year, everyone!

Working Out at Work

<http://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/working-out-at-work>

Too busy or just too plain tired to work out after you get home from the office? More and more businesses are building [fitness](#) opportunities into the workplace as a way to help employees stay fit, healthy, and -- not least of all-- happy. The hope is that this will, in turn, make good business sense, as well.

"If we concentrate on our co-workers, they'll take care of our customers," says Art Friedson, vice president of co-worker services for CDW Computer Centers, headquartered in Vernon Hills, Illinois. CDW built a state-of-the-art gym for its employees. The 20,000-square-foot facility houses, among other things, a [swimming](#) pool, racquetball court, fitness floor, and all the high-tech [exercise machines](#) you could ask for. On-site trainers, nutritionists, and [massage](#) therapists are available, dance and [yoga](#) classes are offered, and you can even join a golf, volleyball, or basketball league.

"The center is convenient and cheap," says Friedson. "For those who want to take advantage of it, it's a great perk."

CDW is not alone in offering a [fitness program](#) to its employees. According to the 2000 Benefits Survey produced by the Society for Human Resource Management in Alexandria, Virginia, 24% of the 606 companies that responded to the survey provide a fitness center or gym subsidy to employees, and 19% actually have an on-site fitness center.

Making Fitness Convenient

"Regular exercise is clearly linked to improved health," says Dr. Peter Snell, an exercise physiologist and assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Still, Snell adds, about 60% of adults do not exercise, and only 25% get the recommended amount. Exercise recommendations range from 30 to 60 minutes a day -- on most, if not all, days of the week. Forty percent of adults who don't exercise say they don't have enough time.

"The availability of facilities to exercise at the work site removes many of the barriers to exercise," says Snell. These include

- Finding time
- Being self-conscious at public health clubs
- Safety
- Convenience
- Social atmosphere
- Weather conditions
- Expense

Having a place to exercise during lunch can be a real bonus especially for women with children, who may find it difficult to exercise before or after work, says Snell.

Making Fitness Convenient continued...

Not all companies can afford a full-service fitness center, but that doesn't mean they're not providing some fitness options. At Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin,

Elaine Coll, professor emeritus of physical education, organized a faculty-staff noontime workout called "Ultimate Fitness." The idea originally started with a volleyball coach who began the program for physical education students. When the coach moved away, a number of faculty and staff who had been "auditing" the program were left, well, a bit less fit.

So Coll stepped up to the plate. She leads Ripon faculty and staff in an exercise routine that includes a 5-minute warm-up and then a circuit of ten to 12 stations, each of which focuses on an upper- or lower-body exercise or an [aerobic exercise](#). After each station, the workers run one lap around the gym to the next station, and so on, until all stations have been visited. This is followed by a 10-minute stretch-and-cool-down period.

All this goes on to some "really ghastly music," says Coll, "but we have a great time."

Participation Is Key

Workplace exercise and health programs may seem like a great benefit, but do they really work? Apparently the jury's still out.

According to Roy Shephard, PhD, professor emeritus of applied physiology on the University of Toronto's faculty of physical education and health, work-site exercise and health programs are widely believed to be a way to keep employees healthy, thereby increasing a company's productivity while controlling [health insurance](#) costs.

Participation in work-site wellness programs *can* yield a variety of health benefits, Shephard writes in a February 1999 article, "Do Work-Site Exercise and Health Programs Work?" (published in the journal *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*): The potential benefits include:

- [Weight loss](#)
- Increased cardiovascular health
- Increased muscle strength
- Increased flexibility
- Improved mood
- Lower medical [insurance](#) claims

But Shephard, who is also a past president of the ACSM, also reports that "few, if any, programs have delivered all of the expected benefits." The reason, according to his research, is that most employees don't join them.

That certainly doesn't seem to be the case at CDW Computer Centers, however, where about 1,000 of the company's main-campus 1,800 employees (there are another 900 in other locations) take advantage of CDW's on-site fitness center.

Participation Is Key continued...

"Our co-workers love it," says Friedson. "It gives them the opportunity to get together in a relaxed setting." An added bonus, says Friedson, is that working out is becoming "contagious."

Friedson is well aware that company-sponsored fitness programs are thought to contain medical costs by keeping employees healthy and fit, but he himself has no measurable figures to back that up. It doesn't really matter to him though.

"We're really more interested in keeping our co-workers engaged, motivated, and happy. We don't focus on whether we're saving a dollar or two per person on sick time."