



Walking Football

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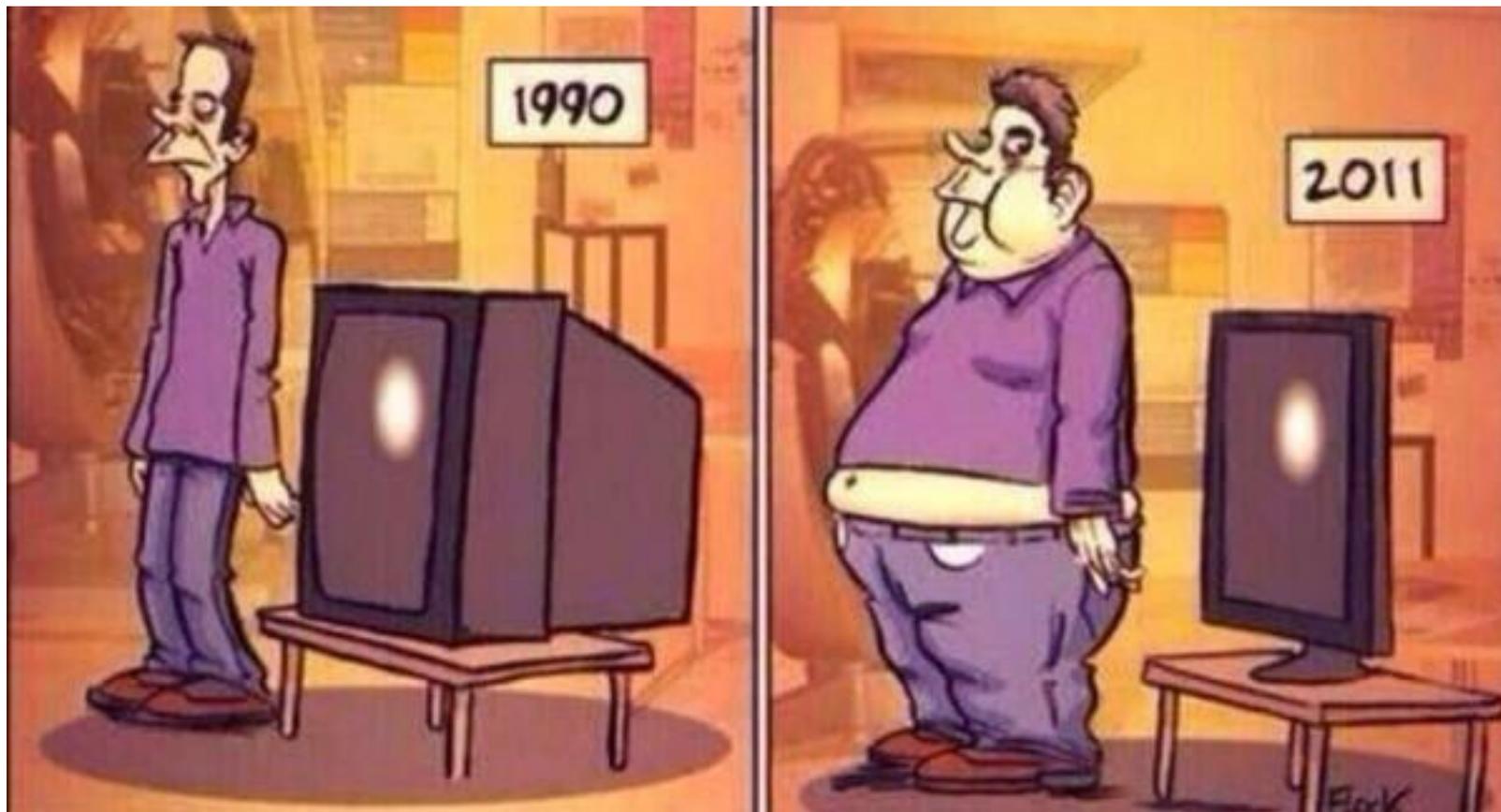


Football is healthy across the lifespan



“This supplement contains 16 original articles describing how football conducted as small sided games affects fitness and health of untrained individuals across the lifespan. The intermittent nature of football and high exercise intensity result in a broad range of effects. The heart changes its structure and improves its function. Blood pressure is markedly reduced with the mean arterial blood pressure being lowered by ~10 mmHg for hypertensive men and women training 2-3 times/week for 12-26 weeks. Triglycerides and cholesterol are lowered and body fat declines, especially in middle-aged men and women with type 2 diabetes. Furthermore, muscle mass and bone mineral density increases in a number of participant groups, including 65-75-year-old men. The functional capacity is elevated with increases in VO_2 max of 10-15%, and 50-100% improvements in the capacity to perform intermittent work within 16 weeks. These effects apply irrespective of whether the participants are young, overweight, elderly or suffering from a disease. The studies clearly show that the participants enjoy playing football and form special relationships with their team mates. Thus, football is a healthy activity, providing a unique opportunity to increase recruitment and adherence to physical activity in a hitherto underserved population, and to treat and rehabilitate patients with hypertension, type 2 diabetes and prostate cancer.” [Bangsbo et al. \(2014\).](#)

We need to innovate





What is Walking Football?



See videos at:

<http://www.northumberlandfa.com/players/walking-football>

And

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-36329589>



How popular is Walking Football?



663 Walking Football sessions in the UK

Festivals & Leagues running across the country



NUFC Foundation, Gateshead FC, Active Northumberland, all using WF as part of community programmes



NFA 2016 Festival included 170 players
Average age: 62
Oldest Player: 84



Where next for Walking Football



COMPETITIVE



**SOCIAL/HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT**



The research (one study published so far)



- “Results: 12 weeks walking football significantly reduced body fat mass (week 0, 27.4 (9.0) kg versus week 12, 24.4 (8.9) kg, $p < 0.05$, $d = 1.0$) and reduced percentage body fat (week 0, 30.3 (8.2) % versus week 12, 27.5 (8.5) %, $p < 0.05$, $d = 1.0$). A significant increase in time to volitional exhaustion during incremental exercise (week 0, 545 (102) s versus week 12, 603 (102) s, $p < 0.05$, $d = 0.7$) was observed without any change in peak blood lactate. Non-significant differences with medium effect sizes were seen for a reduction whole body mass, increase in lean body mass and a reduction in body mass index.
- Conclusions: This investigation suggests the potential efficacy of walking football as a public health intervention, even in populations presenting a range of comorbidities, with future research investigating its move to scale.” [Arnold et al. \(2015\)](#).



Discussion



- How can we research this?
 - Funding
 - Recruitment
 - Do we even need to?
- Walking football – what's next?
 - Models of sustainability
 - Inter-generational?
 - Women's walking football?



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