Walking sport - A look at the research

Recent local and national research has revealed the many benefits of walking sport, specifically Football and Netball, on physical reconditioning. This evidence could help inform local health professionals work on engaging older adults in physical activity and help with reducing falls and the impact of deconditioning associated with the coronavirus pandemic.

1 Walking Football

- Classified as a ‘moderate to vigorous’ intensity activity [1]
- 60 minutes has the same biomechanical loading as 25 minutes of ‘running football’ [1]
- 60 minutes can have ~100 changes in direction and 45 low intensity accelerations and decelerations [1]
- An average heart rate of ~76% of max (up to 95% in some cases) [1]
- Both fat and sugar (muscle glycogen and blood glucose) used for energy [1]
- Significant improvement in mean arterial blood pressure [2]
- 9% reduction in body fat percentage [3]

2 Walking Netball [4]

- 8% improvement in functional movement
- 8% improvement in balance
- 17% improvement in Gait-Speed
- 23% improvement in Sit-Stand ability
- 6% improvement in mental health and wellbeing
- 4.5% reduction in risk to physical function

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[1] Harper LD etal, (2020), The Physiological, Physical, and Biomechanical Demands of Walking Football: Implications for Exercise Prescription and Future Research in Older Adults, Journal of Aging and Physical Activity, p.478-488
[2] Reddy P etal (2017), Walking football as sustainable exercise for older adults – A pilot investigation, European Journal of Sport Science, P. 1-8
[3] Arnold JT, Bruce-Low S, Sammut L (2015), The impact of 12 weeks walking football on health and fitness in males over 50 years of age, BMJ Open sport and exercise medicine.
[4] Kinnafick F, Brinkley A, Adams E, Bailey S, (2021), The WI Walking Netball Programme Final Evaluation Report, Loughborough University and England Netball

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