



# Understanding sport adherence strategies in Masters athletes: A grounded theory

Zakry Walsh<sup>1</sup>, Sean Brayton<sup>1</sup>, Bettina Callary<sup>2</sup>, Scott Rathwell<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Lethbridge, <sup>2</sup>Cape Breton University

## Introduction

- Much of the **global population** is **physically inactive** (Colley et al., 2011)
- Masters athletes** (MAs) tend to **exceed physical activity (PA)** recommendations (Young & Medic, 2011)
- Pre-existing behaviour change theories/models that are **created outside of sport and PA** are often **ineffective** (Rhodes & Nigg, 2011)

## Methods and Participants

- Straussian grounded theory** (Corbin & Strauss, 2018)
- Semi-structured **interviews**
- Data analysis
  - Open Coding, Axial Coding, Theoretical Integration
  - Memoing and Constant Comparison
- 14 MAs (9F, 5M)** Average age = **53.6 years, SD = 8.38**



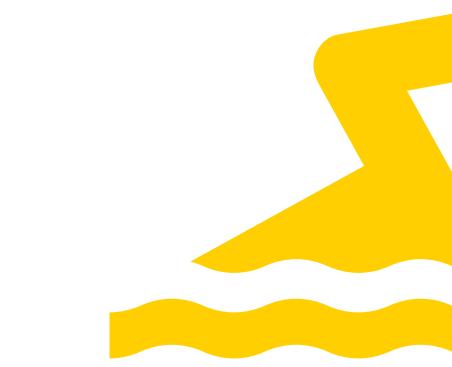
Paddling  
Sports = 4



Marathon/  
Triathlon = 4



Track and  
Field = 3



Swimming = 3

## Discussion

- MAs **depended on strategies** that helped them **manage other priorities** (e.g., work, family) (Dionigi et al., 2015; Makepeace et al., 2021)
- MAs are the **architects of their own developmental environment** (e.g., jobs, distance to training) which helps them **maintain their participation in Masters sport** (Ericksson et al., 1993; Young et al., 2021)
- Our **grounded theory** captured **important contextual aspects of sport and PA** (Rhodes & Nigg, 2011) which may better **inform older adults on how to adhere to sport and PA**

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## Results

### Grounded Theory

**Personal Strategies**

- Selecting sports
- Registering for events
- Scheduling & tracking
- Creating routines
- Setting goals
- Listening to your body
- Cross-training

**Environmental and Contextual Factors**

- Prior experience as an athlete
- Proximity to training facilities
- Work and employment status

Masters athletes' sport adherence

**Social Factors**

- Family
  - Negotiating & juggling responsibilities
  - Co-participation
- Teammates/Friends
  - Training partners
  - Social media & virtual training
- Coach

### Personal Adherence Strategies

"I typically **train early in the mornings**, where it **wouldn't be interfering with family responsibilities** and it **wouldn't be interfering with work**."

"I knew I **needed to be fit** and I knew I couldn't just exercise, I **needed goals**."

### Environmental & Contextual Factors

"I think of **shift work**, it's going to be challenging ... so I think having a **very traditional balanced work schedule** assists with [regular participation]"

"Being by the river valley was an important part of our decision to live where we live ... **my participation influenced my proximity**."

### Social Factors

"I **had to elicit the support of the whole family** to take it on because it meant that **my husband needed to do more childcare**."

"At this stage of my life I want to do [competitions] if my friends are going."