

How feedback and peer pressure affect self-control at the gym

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Abstract

We investigate the role feedback and peer pressure on gym attendance and personal fitness in a field experiment. New members of a gym are randomly allocated to one of three treatments: Feedback, Peer Pressure and Control. In Feedback, members receive weekly feedback about their gym attendance via email. In Peer Pressure, they share feedback about their weekly gym attendance via email with a self-chosen fitness buddy. In Control, members receive no feedback. We complement the experiment with an online survey which additionally allows us to study how the treatments affect customer satisfaction. Our study allows us not only to draw conclusions on how small nudges such as simple or shared feedback affect gym attendance, but also whether such measures help to increase club members' health (e.g. body fat, strength and endurance performance).

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