

OUTDOOR FITNESS RESEARCH



METZ
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SUMMARY

- 20% OF THE RESPONDENTS WENT FROM INACTIVE TO ACTIVE BECAUSE OF THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE
- 78% ACTIVE PEOPLE BECAME MORE ACTIVE
- INHABITANTS OF ALL AGES AND ETHNICITY WERE ATTRACTED TO THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE
- 50% OF THE INACTIVE USERS WERE TEENAGERS BETWEEN 16-24 YEARS
- WHEN THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE IS PLACED NEXT TO AN ARENA, IT SEEMS TO ATTRACT TEENAGERS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WATCHING SPORT AND GAMES
- 75% OF THE INACTIVE TEENAGERS PREFER TO TRAIN WITH OTHERS
- 87% OF THE USERS LIVE WITHIN 2KM FROM THE SITE
- ALL OF THE INTERVIEWED, SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE
- THE USERS APPRECIATED THE SITE WITH AN 8.4 ON A SCALE FROM 1-10. AND EVEN 20% OF THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE THEY KNEW, AND APPRECIATED IT WITH A SUBLIME GRADE 10.



INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED. LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HAVE DROPPED AND HEALTH CARE COSTS HAVE RISEN.

The increasingly sedentary nature of everyday life is creating communities with alarmingly low levels of physical activity.

Globally over 25% of all adults, and over 80% of adolescents, fail to meet even the minimum levels of recommended physical activity. The price is high, and everyone is paying, both individually and as a society.¹

The cost of inactivity-related diseases, dependency, and lost productivity are impacting on us all. Insufficient physical activity is a top 4 leading risk factor for global mortality.

WE SHOULD NO LONGER ASK OURSELVES IF WE NEED TO ACT, BUT RATHER HOW?

Research initiated by KOMPAN² shows that the desire to become more active is there but unnecessary obstacles are getting in the way, resulting in a downward spiral of inactivity. Time, money and motivation are the main reasons given for not being more active.

A low income can be linked to less free time, limited access to leisure facilities, and living environments that are unsupportive of physical activity. This is a valuable insight, as the research shows that a significant 60% of people feel that today's public spaces do not inspire them to be physically active.

Metz

Metz sets an excellent example when it comes to creating inspirational public spaces for its inhabitants to be active, because the city wants to work on reducing inactivity.

Many sports events are organized by the city. For example, each year Metz citizens have the possibility to participate at the "Marathon Metz Mirabelle" which is the main athletic event in Metz. Everyone can participate whatever their age. Metz is supporting all professionals and non-professionals sports club as the city want to give to all citizens the possibility to exercise several kind of sports in different area. That's why you will see many sports venues in Metz.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

A top 4 leading risk factor for global mortality.

OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT

39% of our population is either overweight or obese.

50% is expected to be overweight or obese in 2050.

COST OF OBESITY

Is equivalent to the cost of armed conflict or smoking.

THE DESIRE TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE IS THERE BUT UNNECESSARY OBSTACLES ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

- Lack of **time**
- Clubs are **expensive**
- In need of a trainer to **motivate**
- Lack of offering within **Community**

Source: McKinsey Global Institute; (UN) United Nations; WHO (Worlds Health Organization)

¹ WHO (2016): Global Health Observatory Data. Retrieved from: http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk_factors/physical_activity_text/en/

² CEDI-KOMPAN (2016): Fremtidens byer er aktive.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to investigate who is using the outdoor fitness site, and whether we succeed in activating the inactive.

The city of Metz count more than 220 000 inhabitants (30th rank out of 36 000 cities in France).

In June 2017, the city of Metz organized an official opening of a Cross Training and Circuit Training site. The location of the site combined with the size of inhabitant made it interesting to analyze who was using the site, the frequentation of the site and the user's impression of it.

METHOD

To gain a better understanding of the users, their motivation and their usage of the fitness site we conducted interviews in combination with a questionnaire.

This made sure that the conversation was more consistent, careful and structured.

Another reason for combining the interview with the questionnaire was to avoid statements being interpreted differently than they were intended by the questioner.

Additionally, a combination of the interview and the structured questionnaire is considered to be less offensive, compared to only using a questionnaire, where answers cannot be explained.

THE SURVEY

- The survey was created with Google Docs
- Interviews were done using a tablet
- Interviews were done over two days (5th and 6th of July 2017)
- Over the two days interviewers observed 50 people using the outdoor fitness site
- 40 interviews were conducted



DESCRIPTION OF THE FITNESS SITE IN METZ

The fitness site is located in front of a park and close to a multisport platform, prized by the sportsmen. Because of that, many runners stop their race to watch the Cross Training and Circuit Training equipment. Next to it you will also find a football/basketball court and a swimming pool.

It is ideal for both individuals and group training classes. Respondents stated the outdoor fitness site creates a place of entertainment in the city and combines indoor and outdoor sports.

The area facilitates some of the most popular training activity; cross training. Cross systems is intelligent design that provides an efficient and effective training space. It offers familiar training known from the indoor gyms where users can train with products like suspension trainers and kettle bells in a safe and vandalism proof environment.

The outdoor fitness site offers high training value and is ideal for group training and social interaction, as many people can easily train side by side. For trainers this means a fast overview, enabling them to offer support and guidance where needed.

The surface patterns can be used to improve one's acceleration, lateral speed and change of direction while enhancing balance, rhythm and body control. These core skills are critical to anyone, athlete or elderly.

The site offers the support of signs and a fitness app which allow users of all ages, fitness levels and abilities to make optimal use of the training location. The app functions as an online personal trainer, guiding users on exercise and nutrition, while motivating them to stay active.



FINDINGS

FINDING #1: THE OUTDOOR FITNESS IN METZ IS BEING USED BY ALL, BUT ESPECIALLY TEENAGERS.

AGE

The outdoor fitness site attracted a mixed group of users. However, 75% of the users were between the age of 16-39 years old (75%). The fact that the outdoor fitness site attracted teenagers is specifically interesting because research from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that teenagers (16-24) do not meet the level of physical activity recommended by the WHO (people in the age of 5-17 years should do 60 min. of moderate to vigorous intensity daily, and for people in the age 18-64 years should do 150 min. of moderate to vigorous intensity through the week).

50% of the user group with an age between 16-24 had an inactive lifestyle before they started to use the outdoor fitness. Of these inactive teenagers, 75% stated that they preferred to train with others, a result that confirms the fact that friendships mean everything for teenagers³ and they prefer to hang out in bigger groups. Having a first group of teenagers that use the outdoor fitness site can have a huge effect on activating other teenagers. That means that the outdoor fitness site in Metz can be effective in increasing the activity level within this age group. The Survey shows that it is not only the inactive teens that increase their physical activity level. Even 57% of the active teenagers (16-24 years old) stated that they had increased their physical activity level by using the outdoor fitness.

A reason for this high number of teenage users could be the fact that they considered the Cross Systems and outdoor fitness area to be cool. It symbolizes an art of living which they recognize from the US places like Muscle Beach, a place where they can compete in sports, show off, hang out with friends, play music and chill.

Other reasons for the high usage by teenagers is the fact that the use of the outdoor fitness area is free of charge. Also the fact that the outdoor fitness site is placed next to "Les Arènes in Metz" which is equipped with a large multi-purpose space with more than 4,500 seats and eight sports halls. The Metz Arena hosts large competitions on a regular basis, such as the 2017 World Handball Championship. In addition to major cultural events like concerts, performances, and therefore has a great attraction on teenagers and younger adults.

FIGURE 2
AGE MIX OUTDOOR FITNESS

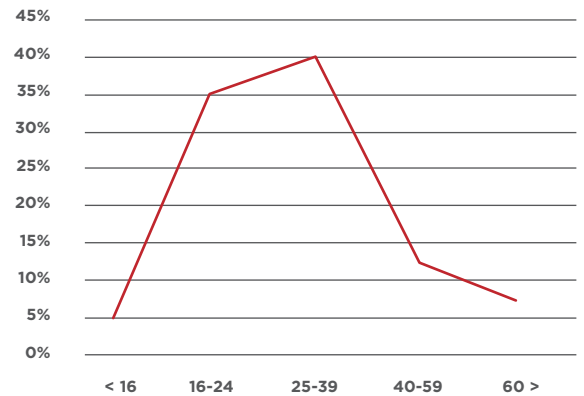
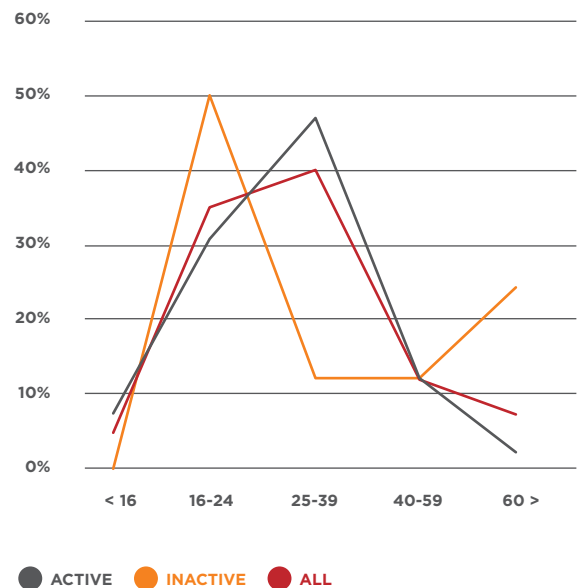


FIGURE 3
AGE MIX



"It's really good. It is like the United States. It's more convivial to do outdoor sports because indoors you can not put on music and make group challenges."

FINDING #2: THE OUTDOOR FITNESS IN METZ IS BEING USED BY ALL, BUT WAS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE USED BY MEN (82%).

GENDER

When it comes to the gender split between users, we do see a significant difference between the users of the outdoor fitness and the average indoor fitness (figure 4). In the indoor fitness 45% of the users are women and 55% of the visitors are men. At the outdoor fitness in Metz we observed that just 18% of the users were women and the majority of 82% of the users were men. The fact that 75% of the inactive and 59% of the active users knew about the existence of the outdoor fitness site because they saw it, could be an explanation of why mostly men used the site. The outdoor fitness area is placed next to an arena and a football / basketball court - ,activities that attract more men than woman.

A second reason for the small amount of female users might be that the area was equipped with equipment for Cross Training and Street workout and not so much for cardio training. From the project "health for millions" (Kasper Lund Kirkegaard & Karsten Østerlund, October 2010) we know that men are most interested in strength training and female visitors to an indoor fitness have a distinctive preference for cardio fitness. The same research shows that female users are very interested in social activities and group classes. Organizing group classes could therefor also be a way to increase the amount of female users, also because some of the interviewed women mentioned that they felt intimidated by the area:

During the survey we also observed one group training class, led by a personal trainer. The group existed of 10 people, 7 women and 3 men. Illustrating the believe that organized group training will be a good way to attract more women to an outdoor fitness area.

FINDING #3: THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE ACTIVATED 20% INACTIVE PEOPLE AND MOTIVATED 78% OF THE ACTIVE PEOPLE TO INCREASE THEIR ACTIVITY LEVEL

20% of the interviewed users responded they were not being physically active before they started using the outdoor fitness area in Metz. Almost a similar result to the survey done in Copenhagen (sept 2016), where 23% of the interviewed users were not engaged in any activity before they started using the outdoor fitness. Besides activating the inactive, the outdoor

FIGURE 4
GENDER MIX

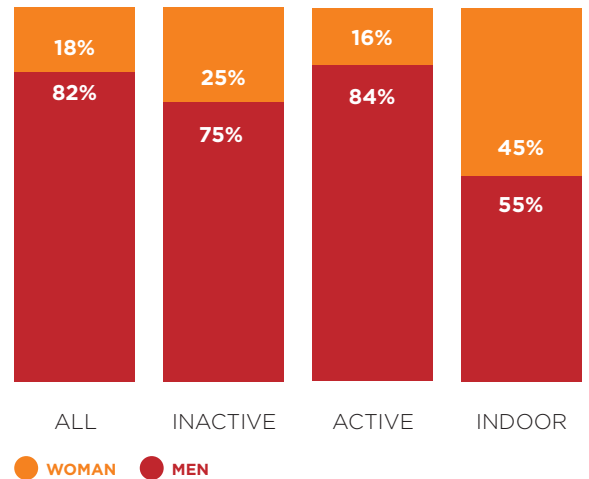
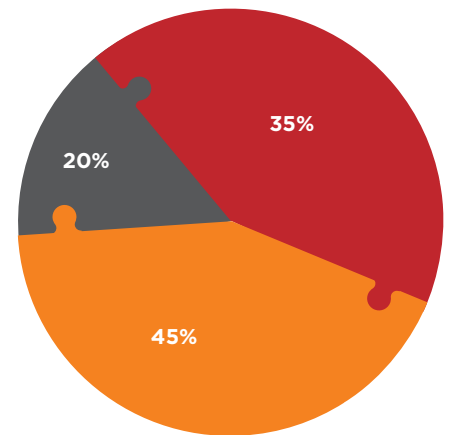


FIGURE 5
ACTIVE OR INACTIVE USERS



- 35% I TRAINED EARLIER IN A CLUB OR IN A FITNESS CENTER, NOW I ONLY TRAIN HERE
- 45% I TRAIN IN A CLUB OR IN A FITNESS CENTER, NOW I ALSO TRAIN HERE
- 20% I DIDN'T TRAIN BEFORE, NOW I TRAIN HERE

Statement from observer:

"Only one young girl came to train after her pool session, but obviously embarrassed by the presence of several men on the area, her elliptical exercise did not last more than 10 minutes."

4 <http://www.idan.dk/vidensbank/udgivelser/sundhed-for-millioner-delrapport-5-fitnesskultur-mellem-forening-og-forretning-aktive-fitnessudoveres-traeningsmotive-tilfredshed-og-selvvrurderede-sundhed/24640e1e-8db2-4df6-9da0-9e0900a7fce7>

fitness area also had very positive effect on the activity level from people that were already having an active lifestyle. 78% of the active people stated that they increased their activity level by using the outdoor fitness area in Metz.

Motivation and encouragement

For the inactive users, the two most important reasons to use the outdoor fitness were the fact that the training facility is outdoors (87.5%) and that they can improve their fitness level (50%).

Research suggests that exercising outdoors is likely to increase effectivity and duration of physical activity. A metastudy reported that participants of numerous studies showed a greater enjoyment and satisfaction with outdoor activity and declared a greater intent to repeat the activity at a later date.⁵ A study focusing solely on the elderly showed that older adults who were physically outdoors accumulated significantly more physical activity than those active indoors.⁶ Exact mechanisms remain unknown but evidence suggests that greater enjoyment and opportunities for more social interaction may contribute to the outdoor activity experience.⁷

For the active users the most important reasons to use the outdoor fitness area were the fact that usage of the outdoor fitness was free of charge (72%), they could train whenever they want (69%) and that they could improve their fitness (69%).

The fact that both the active and the inactive users value the fact they can improve their fitness by using the outdoor fitness equipment shows that scalability and functionality of the outdoor fitness equipment is important. Users should be able to train at their own level because when the training is too easy they will never get results, it will demotivate them, and they will stop using it. If the training is too heavy, it will lead to injuries. In training "one size fits all" does not really exist, you need to be able to adept the difficulty level and resistance to the personal needs.

Local success

The outdoor fitness area mainly attracted people who lived in the area, 87% of the users lived within 2 km's of the outdoor fitness area. Most users, 60%, were encouraged to visit the new sport facility because they passed it and saw it. A significant 34% of the active users answered that they had first heard about the outdoor fitness site through word of mouth, which had encouraged them to visit and use the site. One respondent stated that the municipality should consider enlarging the area, as the usage was likely to develop quickly now the news of the outdoor fitness area was spreading.

FIGURE 6
MOTIVATION TO USE THE OUTDOOR FITNESS

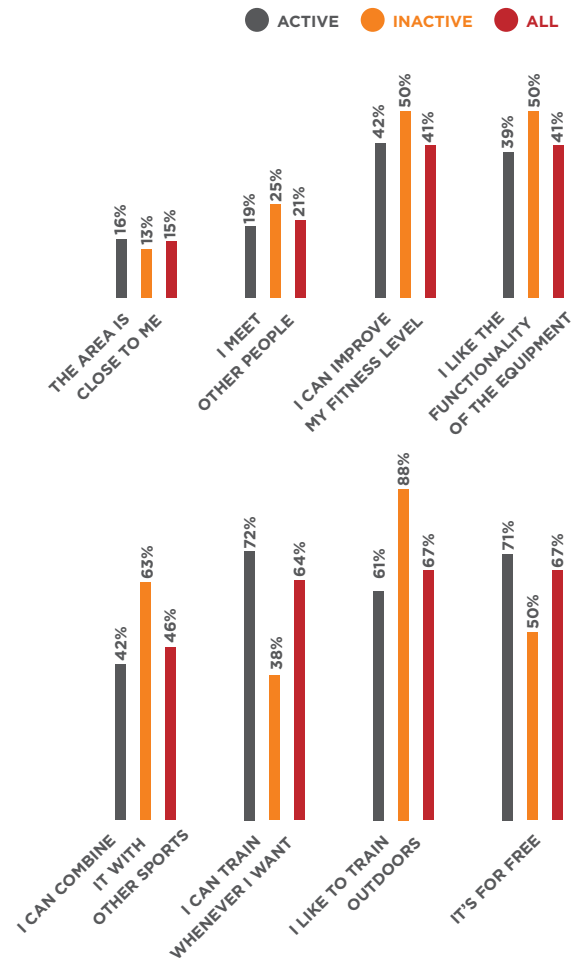
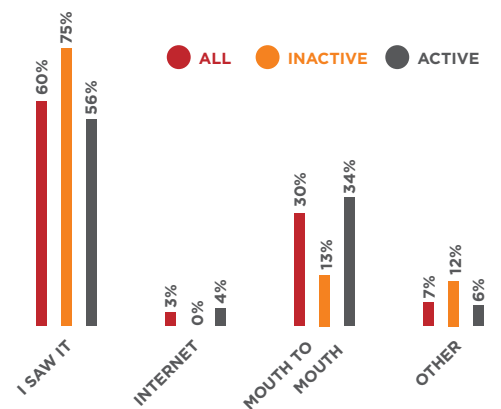


FIGURE 7
HOW WERE YOU ENCOURAGED TO USE THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE



5 Thompson Coon, J., Boddy, K., Stein, K., Whear, R., Barton, J., Depledge MH. (2011) 'Does Participating in Physical Activity in Outdoor Natural Environments Have a Greater Effect on Physical and Mental Wellbeing than Physical Activity Indoors? A systematic review. ', Environmental Science & Technology, 45(5), pp. 1761-1762.

6 Kerr, J., Sallis, J.F., Saelens, B.E., Cain, K.L., Conway, T.L., Frank, L.D., King, A.C. (2012) 'Outdoor Physical Activity and Self Rated Health in Older Adults Living in Two Regions of the U.S.', The International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 9(89)

7 Maas, J., Van Dillen, S.M., Verheij, R.A., Groenewegen, P.P. (2009) 'Social Contacts as Possible Mechanism Behind the Relation between Green Space and Health', Health Place, 15(2), pp. 586-95.

**FINDING #4:
THE OUTDOOR FITNESS SITE IN METZ IS THE BEST. 100% WOULD RECOMMEND IT.**

Recommendation

One of the key measures of the success of the outdoor fitness site is whether the users of the equipment would recommend it to other people. Every one said they would recommend the outdoor fitness site. Another measure of success is the appreciation expressed by the users when asked how they would rate the outdoor fitness site. On average the users appreciated the site with an 8.4, and the inactive users even appreciated the site with an 9,1. on a scale from 1-10. 20% of the people interviewed even thought it was the best outdoor fitness they knew and appreciated it with a sublime grade 10.

“The best fitness area ever seen.”

“Consider an enlargement of the area as the use is likely to develop quickly through word of mouth.”

“The site is excellent for seniors.”

“The fitness area is excellent for seniors in addition to walking to keep in shape.”

“That’s great. It’s like cities like New York and Miami. We find less the spirit of competition and the cult of the body of sports halls.”

“It’s a great environment. Everyone can work at their own pace.”

FIGURE 8

TRAVEL DISTANCE

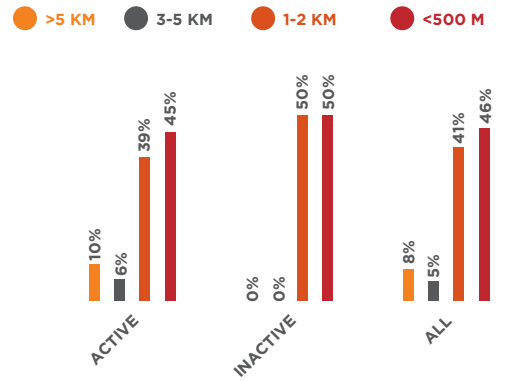
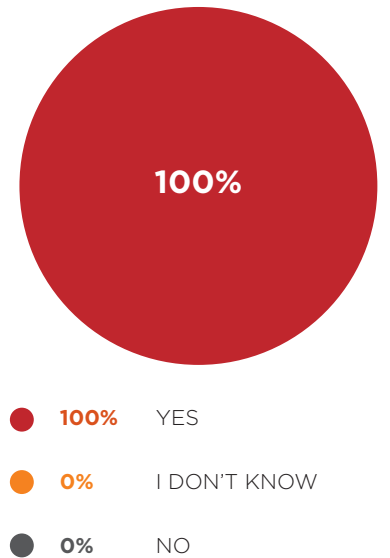


FIGURE 9

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE OUTDOORFITNESS SITE?



CONCLUSION

The study showed that the outdoor fitness site in Metz is a great success. It's getting used by people of all ages and by both French and inhabitants with a different ethnical background. Even though people of all ages were represented, it was very interesting to see that especially the teenagers was attracted to the site. A reason for this could be due to the location, next to a multisport arena and stadium.

Looking into the use of the outdoor fitness site, we saw that more men (82%) than women (18%) were using the outdoor fitness area because the outdoor fitness site was mainly providing strength training (cross training and street workout). Increasing the offerings off organized group classes and adding cardio equipment could be a way to attract more female users. Classes are attractive due to the fact that woman prefer social activities, but also the presence of a personal trainer can create an environment where the women can feel safe, which is very important for the female users. Connecting users to the sport & fitness app could also help to fulfill the demand for interaction. When using the platform people can invite others online and arrange training sessions.

A key finding in the survey is the fact that the outdoor fitness site attracted inactive people (20%) and motivated 78% of the active people to be more active. 50% of the inactive and 37,5% of the active users were teenagers. This shows that the installation of the outdoor fitness site can persuade people and especially teenagers to adapt a more active and healthy lifestyle.

Besides the fact that the use of the outdoor fitness site is free of charge the main motivation for the inactive users is the fact that they can improve their physical condition while being outdoors. Proximity of the site is another important factor. The survey showed that 87% of the users came from within a distance of 2 km., making it local success with a high user appreciation of 8.4 on average. 20% of the users even mentioned that it was the best outdoor fitness site they knew, and gave it a sublime grade 10.

All of the interviewed users already had or would recommend the outdoor fitness site to others, which creates the expectations that the usage of the area will grow rapidly.





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