



EngAGE: Community

A strategy for improving mental, physical and social wellbeing through interactive exercise on the Central Coast

Participant Information Statement

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You are invited to consider participating in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Prof. Rohan Walker and Dr Jaki Wilson from the Centre for Rehab Innovation, and Dr Nattai Borges from the School of Environmental and Life Sciences at the University of Newcastle.

What is the EngAGE project?

The EngAGE project aims to provide senior Australians a fun, safe and socially engaging online exercise program to combat the physical, mental, and social burdens of ageing.

The purpose of the research is to assess the influence of an online group-based program looking to improve the social, mental and physical health of adults aged over 65 years. Information will be collected about the social, mental and physical wellbeing of participants as well as your perceptions of the program. A secondary aim of the EngAGE program is to provide authentic training for Master of Exercise Physiology students at the University of Newcastle.

This project has been funded by the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network.

Why is the research being done?

While several factors can influence health into older age, exercise and social engagement are widely accepted as helpful. This project aims to add more to our knowledge of how best to facilitate online exercise/social programs to reduce social isolation and improve health.

Who can participate in the research?

We are seeking people who would like to try a new and engaging online exercise program designed to increase social interaction.

To participate in this program you must be:

- Over 65 years of age
- Living in the community (not in a Registered Aged Care Facility)
- Living in the NSW Central Coast or Hunter New England Regions
- Have access to the internet and a device that has zoom capabilities

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to attend a 12-week online exercise program. There will be one session a week of approximately 2 hours in duration. The EngAGE program has been designed to be suitable for people over 65 and can also be tailored to suit your needs. The sessions will comprise of specific exercises to improve mobility, strength and balance. In addition to the exercise component the EngAGE program will utilise creative, educational and sharing exercises designed to be fun and build a sense of community within the program. The sessions will have a mix of large and small group activities. In the large group activities up to 20 participants will be involved and for the small group activities 4 participants will be involved. At any point, participants will be supervised by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist or a Master of Exercise Physiology student.

Students enrolled in the Master of Exercise Physiology program at the University of Newcastle will be involved in this program under the supervision of Accredited Exercise Physiologists. This type of student placement will help ensure there will be allied health care workers in the future who understand the needs of older people.

You would be asked to complete online surveys about your social, mental and physical health as well as experiences of the program. This might take 30-60 minutes each at four timepoints across the program. Prior to the commencement of the program, you will be contacted by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to facilitate a pre-exercise health screening to ensure it is safe to complete the program. You will also be contacted by a member of the research team to familiarise you with the program and make sure your working space is safe and free of trip hazards.

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only people who provide written consent can be included in the project. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

The EngAGE program has been designed to be inclusive, enjoyable, educational, and beneficial for overall health for people over 65 years of age. We hope that participation in this project will have an immediate benefit for you and also benefit the student Exercise Physiologists to develop into practitioners. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are building the knowledge base to help improve the design of sustainable online programs into the future. A pre-exercise health screening survey will be used to help identify any relevant health issues you may have and tailor your program accordingly. With any exercise there is a risk of muscle strain or falls. This risk of this occurring will be minimised in this project by the expert guidance and supervision of the Accredited Exercise Physiologists and student Exercise Physiologists who will tailor exercises to individual needs. Each session will consist of a warm-up prior to exercise to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries and you will be required to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for exercise to avoid further injury.

Some questions in the online surveys will ask about how you feel and respond to different situations. Thinking about this may raise concerns for some people. Taking steps to cope with stressful situations is important. If you are experiencing high levels of distress, you may:

- Talk to your GP or a counsellor;
- Call Lifeline on 13 11 14; or
- Visit one of the following support websites:
- <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
- <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
- <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>

How will your privacy be protected?

Data will be retained securely for a minimum period of 5 years from completion of the research and managed/stored in accordance with the University's Research Data and Materials Management Guideline (see <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=72>) or any successor Guideline, and applicable University of Newcastle policy provisions (as amended from time to time). The information we collect from you will be stored securely on password-protected documents and online cloud storage platforms. Your data will be de-identified and only the research team will have access to the information to re-identify your data. The QuestionPro survey platform will be used to collect all survey data. QuestionPro is fully compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and our survey software users can

create and send GDPR compliant data collection surveys. For more information about the security of the QuestionPro platform please click [this link](#). All collected data will be analysed together as a group and only group data will be published. Only the research team will have access to your survey data throughout the project.

How will the information collected be used?

Analysis of the data collected from this project will be used to prepare reports about the benefits of the EngAGE program. The collected data will also contribute to peer-reviewed research papers and conference proceedings.

We will provide each participant a report on the findings after the program is finished, late in 2022.

Non-identifiable data may be shared with other parties to encourage scientific scrutiny, and to contribute to further research and public knowledge.

What do you need to do to participate?

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, you can contact us via email (engage@newcastle.edu.au) and we would happily organise a phone consult.

If you would like to participate, please sign the consent form attached and return it via email to engage@newcastle.edu.au.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Prof Rohan Walker
Deputy Director CRI

Further information

If you would like further information, please contact us through engage@newcastle.edu.au or contact us personally:

*Dr Jaki Wilson
Project Manager (Wednesdays & Thursdays)
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*Dr Nattai Borges
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Complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H2021-0300.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research & Innovation Services, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.