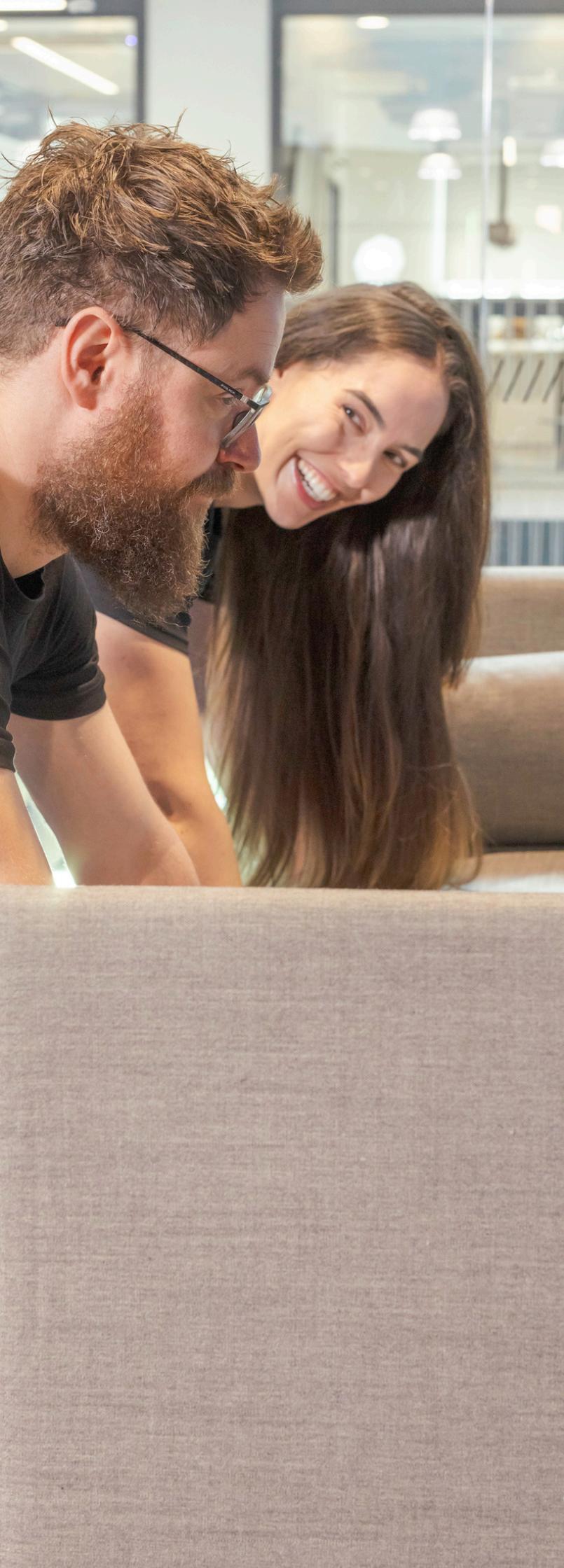




Strength-Training Messaging

REPORT BY GM MOVING AND
ASHLEY GLUCHOWSKI



Executive Summary

A survey and workshop by Dr Ashley Gluchowski and GM Moving found there was broad recognition of the importance and benefits of strength training as early in life as possible.

The biggest barrier to strength-based physical activity for people aged 40-60 was knowing how to perform strength exercises. This audience wants more resources and nudges to make this healthy lifestyle behaviour a habit.

From the research, Dr Ashley and GM Moving have created a series of 11 recommendations to consider whilst when creating content intending to support more women to take part in strength-based physical activity.

GM Moving encourage providers across the city region to consider these recommendations when communicating about strength-training to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get involved.

To raise awareness of strength-training, our partnership launched the first ever Strength-Training Awareness Day on Thursday 4 April 2024 with further plans to raise awareness of the findings in this report already underway.



Introduction: Why Strength Training?

Building and maintaining muscle, bone, and joint strength is important.

Their strength plays a critical role in ensuring good muscular and skeletal health, and in maintaining our ability to complete everyday tasks comfortably.

Muscle strength naturally declines with age after we hit 30, but we can slow the decline by taking part in strengthening activity.

Taking part in strengthening exercises is one of the best things someone can do to keep muscles strong, bones healthy, reduce pain and prolong joint life.

“Physical activity can prevent fragility and support mobility in old age.” - CMO

The Chief Medical Officer’s (CMO) guidelines for physical activity recommend adults complete “muscle strengthening activities” at least two times a week whilst noting that any is better than none. This could include resistance exercises or carrying heavy shopping.



Aims and Objectives

GM Moving and Ashley Gluchowski (University Fellow at University of Salford) worked together to investigate the most effective ways to communicate the need to complete strength-based physical activity with adults aged 40-60.

They felt that programmes often focused on 'older adults' and on 'falls prevention' which do not resonate with middle-aged adults and are less effective in encouraging participation within this age bracket. It moves the focus towards prevention as opposed to treatment.

The aim for GM Moving and Ashley was to better understand whether relevant, clear, and consistent strength-based physical activity messaging could increase the number of people completing the strength-based element of the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines.

40.5% of GM residents complete 2+ muscle strengthening sessions a week - Sport England

Success would see more communications and marketing that positively influences awareness, signposts to opportunities, provides inspiration and motivation, impacts attitudes, and increases physical activity.

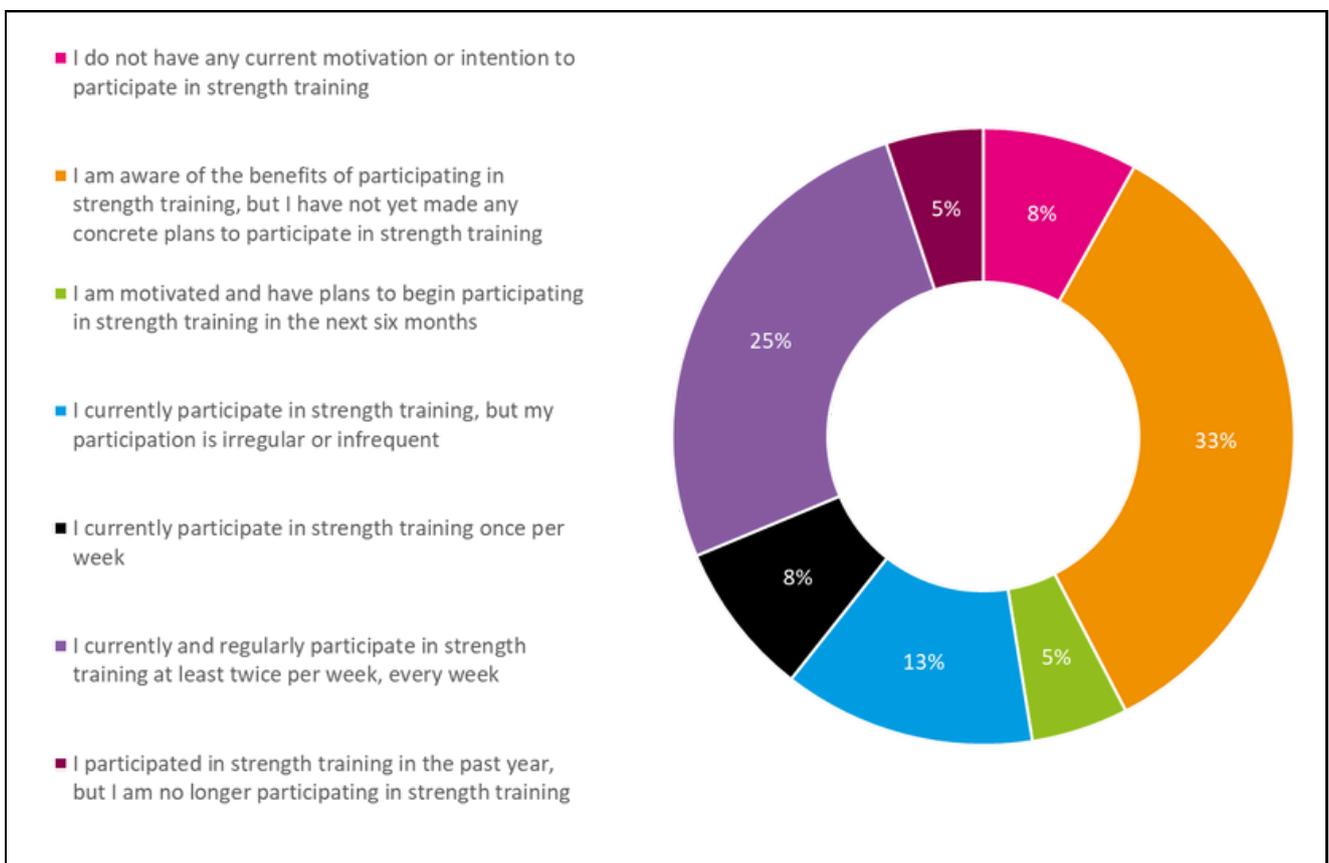
Survey Results

Our initial work focused on the creation and distribution of an online survey which was shared across Greater Manchester between 8 December 2023 and 19 January 2024.

There were 119 responses, with 102 meeting the criteria of being Greater Manchester residents between 40 and 60-years-old and who gave us permission to use their data for this project.

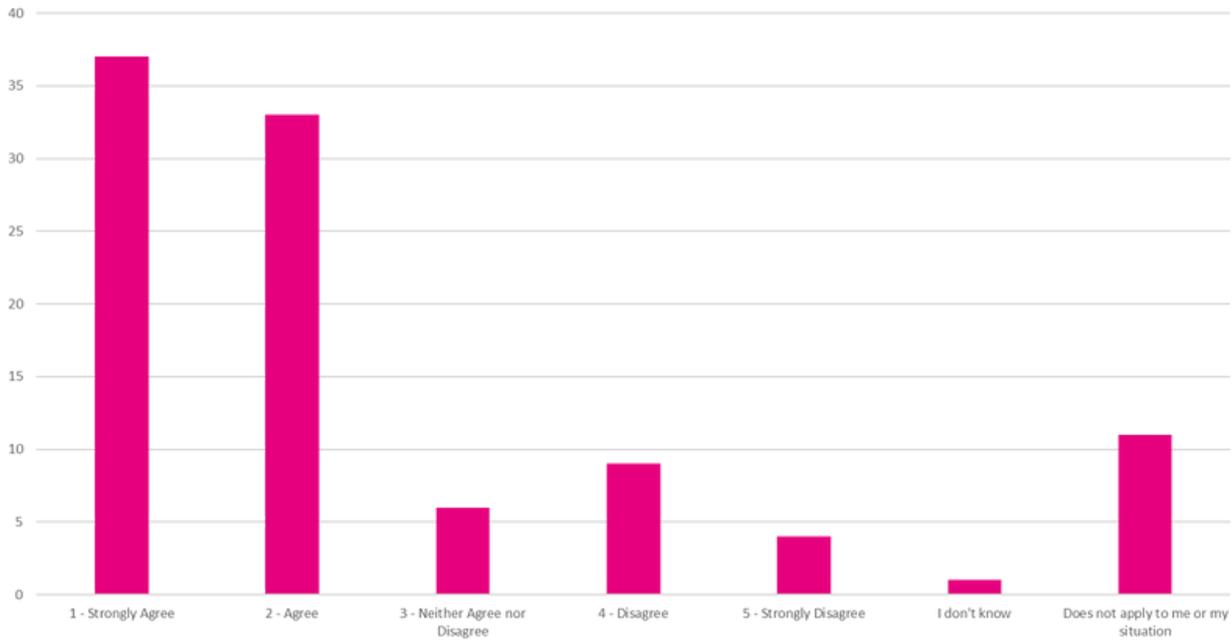
The survey was primarily aimed at women and the majority of respondents (82.4%) were female (n=84) with 17.6% (n=18) identified as male.

The survey results, outlined below, gave us some initial data on the levels of strength-training taking place across Greater Manchester as well an early indication of people's motivations and barriers towards this type of physical activity which could be delved into deeper during the workshop sessions which followed in mid-January.



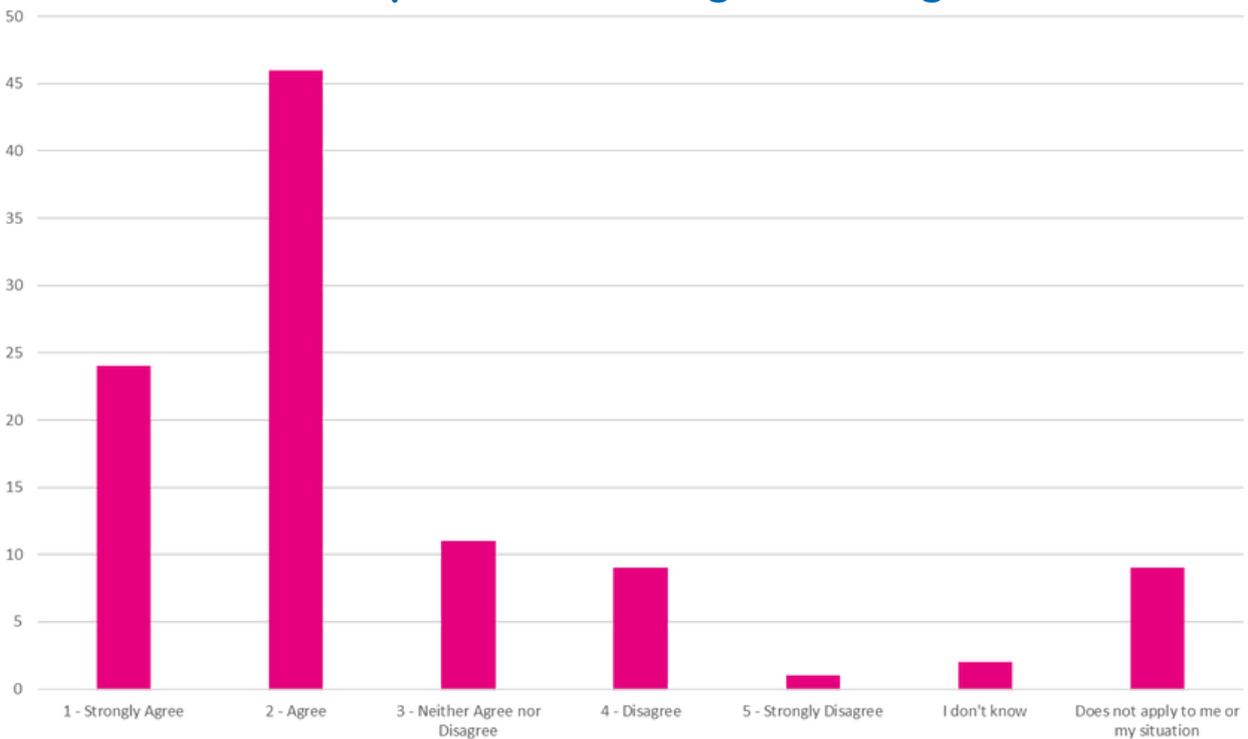
Q4. Please read each of the following statements carefully before selecting the ONE statement that most closely applies to you personally, as of today.

7 in 10 respondents agree/strongly agree they'd be more likely to do strength-training if they knew more about how to do it.



Q6. In order for me to participate in strength training at least twice per week, every week, I would have to...
a) Know more about WHY strength training participation is important for me

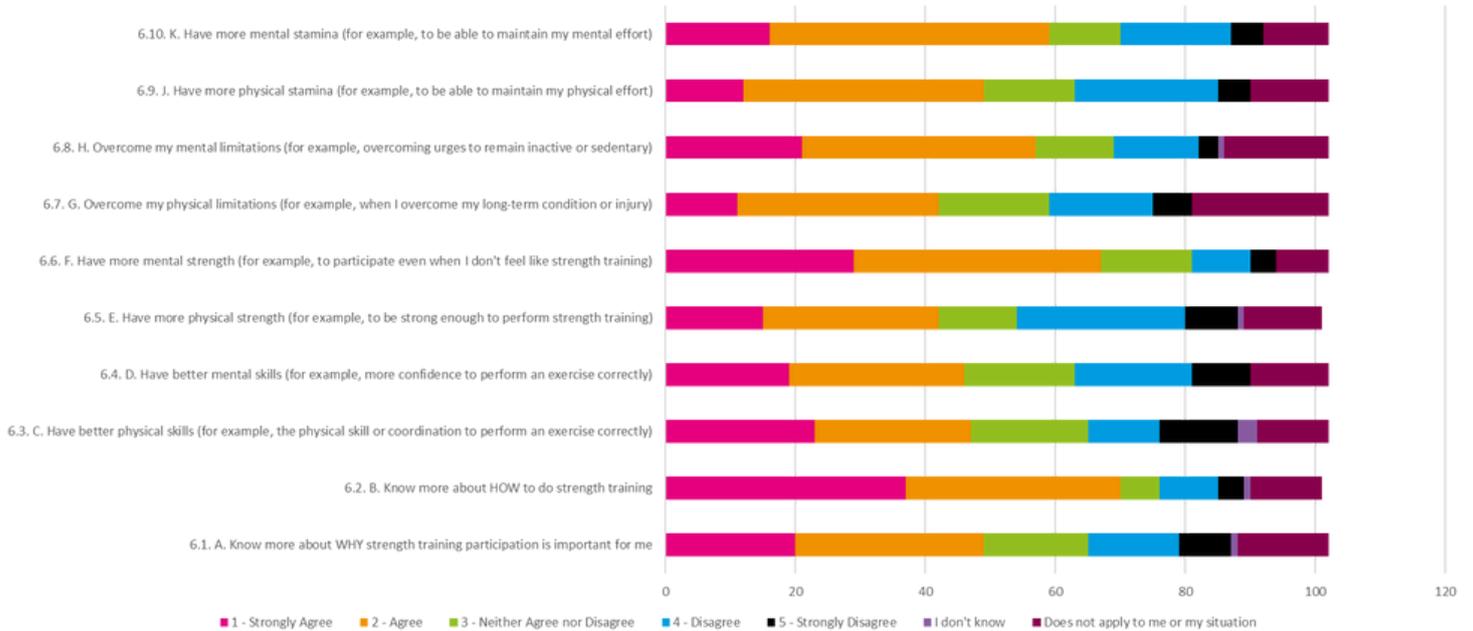
68.6% (n=70) agree/strongly agree they need “the necessary resources” to help them do strength-training twice a week.



Q8. In order for me to participate in strength training at least twice per week, every week, I would have to...
n) Have the necessary resources (for example, equipment, online videos, or personal trainer)

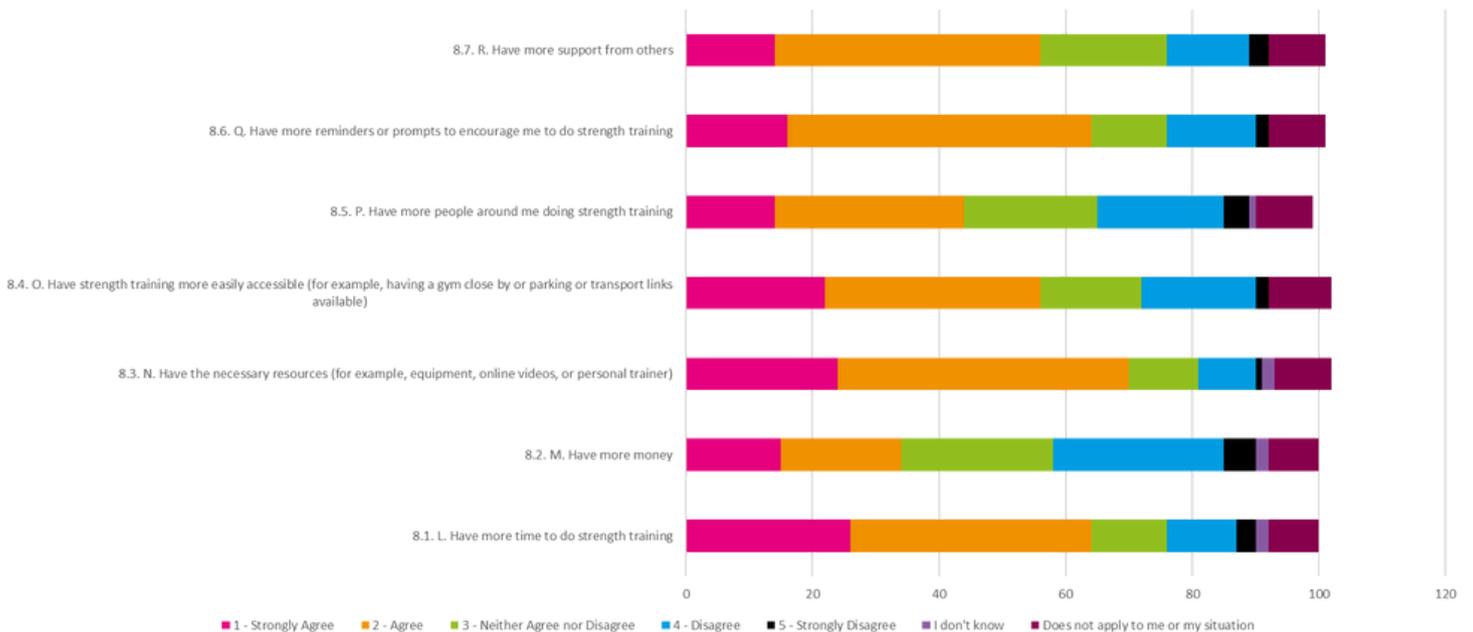
65.7% (n=67) agree/strongly agree more “mental strength” would help them do strength training twice a week.

In order for me to participate in strength training at least twice per week, every week, I would have to...

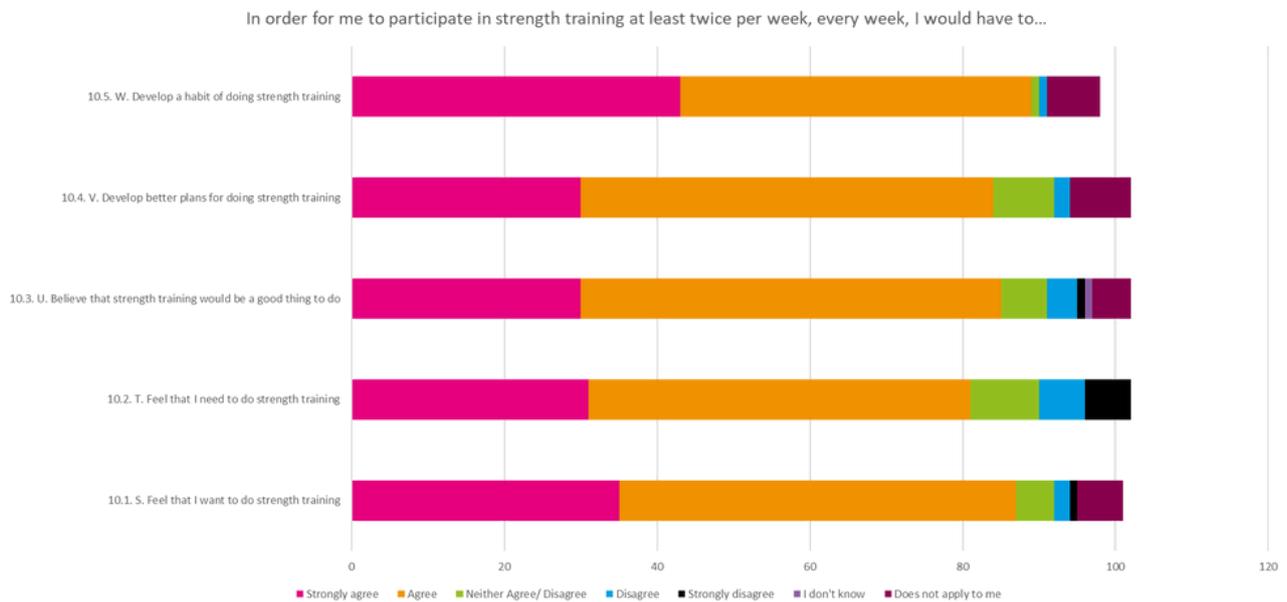


Have more time and more prompts/reminders (both n=64) were also highlighted as key factors in participating twice/week.

In order for me to participate in strength training at least twice per week, every week, I would have to...



Habit building (n=89) and “feel that I want to do it” (n=87) had most strongly agree/agree for respondents to do strength training twice a week.



Summary of survey findings

- Recognition of importance/benefits of strength training as early in life as possible – forming a habit is key.
 - The biggest barrier to strength-based exercise for our target audience is knowing how to perform strength exercises.
 - Our target audience wants more resources and nudges to make this healthy lifestyle behaviour a habit.
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STRENGTH TRAINING MESSAGING GUIDELINES

1 Use images

of real people being active and strong in a variety of ways

1

2

2 Success stories

and quotes are an excellent use of text

3

3 Peers

are the preferred source of information and inspiration

4

4 'How to do it'

should take precedence over 'why' and 'what to do'

5

5 Benefits

other than appearance or performance should be included

6

6 Short and long-term

benefits should be used simultaneously

7

7 Progressive overload

is important for continued benefits and lasting results

8

8 Clear and consistent

messages across messengers, channels, and settings

9

9 Link

to more information and opportunities

10

10 Inclusive

messages include information and opportunities for all, beginner to advanced

11

11 Credible

information comes from recognisable, relevant, trustworthy sources

[Click here to download our Guidelines Document](#)



Read Full Text



As part of the first Strength-Training Awareness Day, GM Moving made a series of new strength-based physical activity imagery available on [our Resource Hub](#). We hope this will be another step towards greater use of marketing imagery which reflects real people doing real exercises in real places. Further photography shoots are planned in Greater Manchester and we encourage you to adapt the guidelines when completing your own photography.

Testing

In addition to additional strength-based physical activity images, we are also working to test the guidelines in practice through the design and implementation of posters.

We hope that these posters will allow us to further test and evaluate the best way to communicate around strength-based physical activity.

If you're interested in learning more about our ongoing work in this area, please get in touch with the team using the contact details on the next page.

Thank You

We are grateful to everyone who completed the survey and those who kindly shared their thoughts, feelings, and experiences during the workshops to improve our understanding around this topic area.



Contact Us

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, we hope you found it useful.

[Click here to read Ashley's full academic paper on this work.](#)

For more information, get in touch:

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