

A coffee to keep New Year fitness resolutions

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Credit: George Hodan/public domain

For anyone struggling to keep the New Year Resolution to 'Do More Exercise' science shows a solution could be found in a simple cup of coffee.

In a paper published this month in the scientific journal *Sports Medicine*, Professor Samuele Marcora, a University of Kent endurance expert, suggests the use of caffeine could help people stick to their fitness plans.

Responding to the findings that the majority of people give up their resolution to do more [exercise](#) within the first 6 months, Professor Marcora, Director of Research at the University's School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, said his research could provide a solution.

Professor Marcora suggests that reducing perception of effort during exercise using caffeine (or other [psychoactive drugs](#) like methylphenidate and modafinil) could help the many people who find difficult to stick to their fitness plans.

Together with lack of time, physical exertion is one of the main perceived barriers to exercise, which is natural as humans evolved to effectively conserve energy. This inherent 'laziness' means that sustaining exercise in the long term is very difficult even when people are still motivated to improve their health and fitness as when they started.

Professor Marcora points out that perception of effort is one of the main reasons why most people choose sedentary activities for their leisure time. Compared to watching television (zero effort), even moderate-intensity physical activities like walking require considerable effort. He says that the use of caffeine or other psychoactive drugs to reduce perception of effort during exercise can make the healthy choice easier.

He also states that whilst there is no strong ethical opposition to the use of psychoactive drugs to help quit smoking (nicotine) or treat obesity (appetite suppressants), the [negative perception](#) of doping in sport may prevent the use of stimulants and other psychoactive drugs to treat physical inactivity which is responsible for twice as many deaths as obesity.

More information: Samuele Marcora. Can Doping be a Good Thing? Using Psychoactive Drugs to Facilitate Physical Activity Behaviour,

Sports Medicine (2015). [DOI: 10.1007/s40279-015-0412-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-015-0412-x)

Provided by University of Kent

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