

MEDIA RELEASE

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Student's innovative invention aims to get you moving

Technology is around us all the time, so why not use it to get healthier?

Patrick Burns, a postgraduate student in the UTAS School of Computing and Information Systems and CSIRO, has been working on a wearable device for increasing exercise levels since he began his PhD more than two years ago.

Patrick's area of research focuses on Human Computer Interaction, an interdisciplinary research area investigating the design, development and evaluation of interactive computing technologies.

His invention has progressed since his last study and he is keen to get participants to test his new prototype.

Dubbed Activ Things, the device is a sleek band that goes on the wearer's wrist, with lights that flash to indicate different levels of exercise activity, using a simple traffic light system.

"If you are exercising well, the light is green- if you're just doing the average, it's yellow and if you've been doing less than the average, then its red," Patrick said.

"This research is trying to see whether we can keep the need to be active in the front of people's minds by having a reminder right there on the wrist."

Patrick's last study showed that people preferred to have their activity levels tracked over a week, rather than daily, so the new prototype reflects exercise over a seven-day period.

The device also gives the wearer an exercise goal to reach.

"I'm looking at what actually motivates us to get moving- research shows negative self-image, or the belief you are unfit, are not actually great motivators for exercise.

"Good motivators are things like fun or the social aspect.

"Some people find motivation exercising as a group or on a team, so as well as having one light on the device representing your own activity, there are other lights that represent a visual ranking of your friends or other people in your exercise group.

“This gives a sense of competition, hopefully motivating the wearer to do more exercise to beat their friends,” he said.

“Some people have a negative self-belief that they cannot exercise or change their health, but maybe if we use technology we can shift that attitude.”

To participate in the study:

Participants can be male or female and aged between 18-65. They must be able to do around 30 minutes of low intensity physical activity per day.

Participants will be asked questions such as how they felt wearing the device, how their activity levels changed and how they feel it impacted their desire to exercise.

The first study goes for six weeks and about 40 people are required.

Participants will be given \$20 to cover the cost of charging the device and will also go into the draw to win an iPad.

Media note: It would be of great help to the research study if stories could include the website, www.activthings.net This website also includes a video explaining how the project and device work.

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