ZeroFit

THESIS PILOT · ZEROFIT LABS

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Short movement breaks for students and researchers

A ready-to-run pilot of the ZeroFit app for a Bachelor's or Master's thesis in sport science, psychology or public health. The app, the data collection and the support come from us; the research questions can be your own.

Why it matters

Long sitting at desks, benches and in lectures is common, and short movement breaks are an obvious answer, but the evidence is thin: a 2025 Cochrane review rated the evidence on additional work breaks as very uncertain, and none of the included studies looked at how long a break should be. Daily-life experiments suggest that breaks of only three minutes may lift mood and energy (Giurgiu et al., 2024). What is not known is whether people take short guided breaks on their own, and which dose and type of break helps.

The app today

TRAIN

A workout without decisions

Users choose their time (5 to 60 minutes) and rate their energy on a five-step scale. With their fitness level, this sets the dose: exercises, sets, repetitions, rest and intensity. A low-energy day still gets a small session.

QUICK RESET

A break at the desk

Users pick how they feel (for example stressed, foggy or sleepy) or a part of the body that bothers them (neck, shoulders, wrists). They get seated guided stretches of up to five minutes, and the app asks afterwards: better, same or worse?

BEDSIDE

Movement in bed

Gentle guided movements to do in bed, as an alternative to scrolling before sleep.

Around 1,000 guided video exercises: strength (push, pull, squat, hinge, lunge, core), cardio, mobility, stretching and yoga. Pain areas declared in the profile remove exercises that would load them. No streaks or daily targets. Web app on the phone, nothing to install; currently in closed beta.

Our aim: find out whether students and researchers use ZeroFit's short guided breaks over eight weeks, find them useful, and show early changes in how they feel.

Our hypotheses: most participants keep using the app and rate it as easy and helpful; after a Quick Reset they feel better more often than worse; stress, well-being and neck or shoulder complaints improve slightly over the eight weeks.

The pilot at a glance

Participants	25 to 50 students and researchers, voluntary
Duration	8 weeks of use, plus baseline and follow-up
App modes	Train and Quick Reset; Bedside optional
Setup	Phone browser, nothing to install; a short introduction for participants
Design	Chosen with the supervising group, from a single-group before-and-after study to a waitlist control or A/B comparison
Cost	None for the university or the participants
Data	Pseudonymised, exported for the student's analysis

What we offer

- **Room for your own research questions.** Aims and hypotheses from the supervising group's research focus can be added, for example on break dose, break type, timing, or mood and stress in daily life.
- **A separate study version of the app** with the measures built in: questionnaires, before-and-after ratings and usage logs are collected inside the app, so the student does not have to collect data separately.
- **Comparisons inside the app** where the design needs them, for example two break lengths or two types of break.
- **A timestamped data export** with a codebook, ready for analysis.
- **Free access** for all participants, a named ZeroFit contact throughout, and an introduction for participants.

Possible measures

Usage logs (sessions, time of day, length) · before-and-after ratings in the app · usability (System Usability Scale) · perceived stress (PSS-10) · well-being (WHO-5) · neck, shoulder and back complaints (Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire) · sleep (PSQI) · perceived exertion (Borg scale). The final selection is agreed with the supervising group.

Timeline

Before the start
Study design and ethics with the supervisor; we prepare the study version of the app.

Week 0
Introduction for participants and baseline measures.

Weeks 1 to 8
Participants use the app in their own working day.

Week 8 and after
Follow-up measures, data export, analysis and thesis.

Interested in this thesis?

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