

WATCHING TELEVISION LOWERS HEART RATE AND PERCEIVED EXERTION DURING CYCLING PERFORMANCE.

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Abstract

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Young adults commonly utilize distractive methods to complete a workout session and/or to increase personal enjoyment. Popular methods for mental distraction include: listening to music, reading a book, or watching television. PURPOSE: To examine the differences in heart rate (HR), caloric expenditure (CE), and rating of perceived exertion (RPE) between cycling performed with and without mental distraction (television watching). METHODS: 18 moderately active, college-age males (n = 4) and females (n = 14) volunteered for this study. Prior to testing, all participants completed a familiarization session, which was primarily intended to standardize cycle ergometer fit and workload settings. Thereafter, all participants completed two test sessions in a

random order: one with distraction and one without distraction. During each session, participants completed 20-min of cycling exercise at a self-selected “moderate” intensity level. At least 24 hours of rest separated the testing sessions to promote recovery. For the distracted cycling condition, each participant chose a 20-minute Netflix television show to view while cycling. Participants cycled on a Monark 328e cycle ergometer while wearing a Polar HR monitor around the chest. A TrueOne 2400 metabolic cart was used to measure HR and CE. A standard 15-point Borg scale was used to measure RPE. Every five minutes HR, CE, and RPE were recorded for data analysis. RESULTS: There was a significant difference in HR ($p = 0.02$) and RPE ($p = 0.01$) between distracted (141 ± 14.1 -bpm, 12.4 ± 1.2) and non-distracted (151.1 ± 14.9 -bpm, 13.5 ± 1.8) conditions. No statistical difference was observed in CE ($p = 0.18$) between distracted (138.7 ± 49.5 -kcal) and non-distracted (144.6 ± 57.6 -kcal) conditions. CONCLUSION: It is possible that a longer cycle session and the genre of television show may have positively or negatively affected CE between conditions. However, the present results suggest that cycling while watching TV may decrease HR and RPE. Consequently, a mental distraction may help participants to perceive cycling exercise as less difficult and/or more enjoyable.

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