

Title

Lifestyle e-coaching

Short description

E-coaching is any form of coaching that takes place using electronic devices, preferably via a smartphone. E-coaching applications aim at changing health and/or sustainable behavior, such as become physically active, sleep better, eat healthier or use less energy. The methods of an effective e-coaching service is based upon scientific coaching literature. E-coaching services are often combined with wearables or smart homes. The most effectiveness is obtained when using smartphones, since people always have their smartphone, and with individuals who have some awareness about the importance to change their behavior. This form of behavior change has great applicability for different groups since everyone has a smartphone and the coaching may occur any time a day without an extra appointment. Furthermore, there are little variable costs in this practice, just the fixed costs in the beginning to develop and enroll the coaching application. At present, many different services exist and they keep improving by making the service more and more tailored to specific individuals.

Topic

Living – Energy efficient housing:

there are coaching systems that able you to regulate and give advice on your housing energy efficiency via your mobile phone, such as www.eneco.nl/toon-thermostaat/

Moving – Active mobility:

a broad range of e-coaching applications provide support to increase fitness. Often combined with a wearable. One of the most popular at the moment is www.fitbit.com/uk/app

Consuming – food;

Applications aim at improving food quality intake and managing waste, such as www.rise.us

Characteristics (type, level)

National, Private, Public Innovation/product.

Country/Countries of implementation

The English lifestyle e-coaching applications are available worldwide, many countries have versions in the national language.

Aims and Objectives

The specific goals vary for each application, but the overall aim of the e-coaching applications is to change behavior towards a more sustainable and/or healthier lifestyle via smartphones, wearables and/or smart homes. For instance, become more active, eat healthier and/or spend less energy.

Target Group

Anyone who wants to or needs to change certain parts of his/her behavior and has a mobile phone or e-mail.

Status

Implemented on a continuous basis.

Start and Completion dates

Some lifestyle e-coaching applications have been in use for years, and regularly new ones become available.

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

People receive devices that measure various parameters, such as heartbeats, movements, energy consumption, and base an assessment of activity level, food intake or energy use on these measurements. Based on this information, users receive personalized coaching through recurring and timely messages on their app to achieve their personal goals and adopt a healthier or more energy-friendly lifestyle.

Effects on:

Health and Wellbeing	Activity and food e-coaches help to improve one’s activity level or the quality of one’s food intake, both of which is known to have a positive impact on one’s personal (heart) health and well-being. Energy use e-coaches help to reduce energy use, which not only has a positive impact on one’s personal energy bill, but also reduces air pollution from fossil fuel consumption, positively affecting everyone’s health in the long run.
Vulnerable populations	Paid lifestyle services may be less accessible for social and economically vulnerable groups.
Environment	Activity e-coaches might stimulate people to use active transport as one of the ways to increase personal activity. This than has the additional beneficial effect or reducing CO2 emissions. Food e-coaches might also stimulate people to eat locally, and if so will help reduce the CO2os emissions involved in transport. Energy e-coaches have the explicit goal to save energy (and reduce energy bills).

Initiated and/or implemented by

Companies or non-profit organizations for various reasons usually initiate lifestyle e-coaching applications. General reasons are a tailored approach for the greater good. E-coaching practices also arise complementing an existing service.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

Businesses and non-profit organizations.

Financial support

Businesses and non-profit organizations.

Evidence-base

A review article has evaluated experience with and proof for mobile phone interventions in e-coaching to increase physical activity:

- Stephens, J., Allen, J., Mobile phone interventions to increase physical activity and reduce weight: A systematic review, *J. Cardiovasc Nurs.* 28 (2013) 320-329

Other articles describing individual studies on e-coaching to increase physical activity:

- Wijsman et al., 2013, *J Med Internet Res* 15, <http://www.jmir.org/2013/11/e233/>
- Vroege et al., 2014, *J Med Internet Res* 16, <http://www.jmir.org/2014/12/e265/>
- Broekhuizen et al., 2016, *J Med Internet Res* 18, <http://www.jmir.org/2016/4/e74/>

Articles describing the use of e-coaching for lifestyle changes in food consumption:

- Blanson Henkemans et al., 2009, *Technology and Health Care* 17, 1–15
- Di Noia et al. 2008, *Am J Health Promot.* 22, 336–341.

And for both lifestyle goals at the same time:

- Bickmore et al., 2013, *Patient Educ Couns* 92, 142–148.

Main activities

Various e-coaching services have been implemented. Their approach may differ related to their goal. The effectiveness of the applications is investigated in separate experiments involving between 11 and 3089 participants.

Evaluation

Multiple review articles compare the effectiveness of e-coaching services based on experiments. The review concludes that most of the trials demonstrated a beneficial impact of text messaging or smartphone application interventions for reduction of cardiovascular risk factors, including physical inactivity and overweight.

Main results

Overall conclusion is that e-coaching can be beneficial for your health (and environment).

Key success factors and barriers

Participants have to be at least aware of the potential benefits that the lifestyle changes entail for them. Without their awareness and wish to reach these benefits e-coaching cannot be expected to be effective.

More information

A repeat of the scientific articles mentioned before:

- Stephens, J., Allen, J., Mobile phone interventions to increase physical activity and reduce weight: A systematic review, *J. Cardiovasc Nurs.* 28 (2013) 320-329

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- Wijsman et al., 2013, *J Med Internet Res* 15, <http://www.jmir.org/2013/11/e233/>
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[INHERIT perspective](#)

Lifestyle e-coaching has been chosen for inclusion in the INHERIT database because it has a clear focus on changing lifestyle & changing behavior. While many persons are open to change their lifestyle because it is better for their health and/or better for the environment, it is not always easy for them to actually achieve the intended lifestyle changes, Lifestyle e-coaching is a tool that supports and motivates such persons in a personal way, needing only a smartphone or an email address. As such it has the potential to address a large group of people.

[Contact](#)

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