



MANAGING ONESELF WITH EXERISE

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

This is my sixth year as a principal and my 28th year in education. The years while in the classroom, I was also the head volleyball coach and assistant basketball coach. One year I went to the school nurse and asked her what a red spot was on my side. I remember her asking are you under stress? Fatigue? At that time, I was teaching coaching two basketball teams at the same time. She stated, "I think you have shingles; you need to go to the doctor." I told her I don't have time and she said, "Go today!" I continued my teaching and coaching career till I moved into high school athletic director. My calendar was my Bible and I always had it with me. It was while I was an athletic director, that I had my first experience with pneumonia. I had felt tired before getting sick and it was exhausting. I remember the assistant principal asking me why I was at work, I replied, "are you going to do my job?" He responded, "no." My father is a farmer, and my mother was a computer programmer. I received my first job in the same building as my mother and I remember very clearly when I got my first job – don't call in sick, work hard and do not ruin my name. I have only missed one day, which dad had plowed the road, and someone got stuck, so she couldn't go to work. I grew up with a very strong work ethic and believed you just keep going.

When thinking about an AR Project and the focus should be on me, I felt I had to do something related to my health. The year prior to my AR Project I experienced stress that affected my health. When I am worn down, I do not listen to my body but keep going and keep working. I not only contracted Covid-19, but I also had pneumonia along with it. I felt that if I had focused more on me and put the level of stress into perspective, I would have had a much better year. I taught Physical Education and Health, so YES, I know what I should be doing regarding taking care of myself, but

easier said than done. I have not been exercising nor focused on taking care of myself mentally and emotionally. I am one who lives by my calendar and am a planner and I knew I would need to write it down to accomplish this goal. I decided to look at if I incorporated exercise into my routine would it reduce my stress level in both my school and personal life.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to incorporate exercise into my routine to reduce stress in both my school and personal life.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered what changes I might see while adding exercise to my routine.

My Actions (Slide 5)

In this step, I began thinking about what I have done in the past that has been successful. I had many questions going through my mind.

- I was thinking about what types of exercise that I would stick with. Would it be better if I exercised at home or going to the YMCA or exercising at school?
- What time would be best to workout.
 - I hate getting up early so I was doubting that would be the time.
 - Looking at my calendar, I wasn't sure when exercise would happen, especially on days that I had evening events. I have attended all the junior high activities, and I try to attend as many of the high school events as I can. I am in a 7-12 building.
- What effects have the lack of exercise and stress had on my body?
 - My neck is a sign of my stress level. The previous year I would have a knot on the side of my neck, and I knew it was stress related.
 - My back would also hurt.

- Many nights I would not be able to sleep well, due to mind didn't stop thinking about school or re-playing a situation in my head.
- What effects have the lack of exercise and stress had on my decision making as a principal?
 - I am sure there were times that it might have affected my performance, but more noticeably it affected my emotional level.
- What effects have the lack of exercise and stress had on my emotional level?
 - I would not have any motivation to do anything once I was home from school.
 - I would truly shut the world out once I was home, at times not communicating with friends or family.
 - I would put off simple chores at my house due to mood, which was very unlike me.

I spent time deciding whether I would join the YMCA or not. In previous years I had membership at the YMCA and would regularly go and workout. I looked over my schedule for Jan – March and decided that I didn't want to add more time away from the house. It also didn't help that it was winter, not very encouraging weather to get out and workout. I decided I would have the opportunity for higher success if I exercised at home.

I decided I would collect data by keeping a calendar and a journal. The calendar would have what type of exercise I performed. The journal would have notes as to my mood and stress level.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

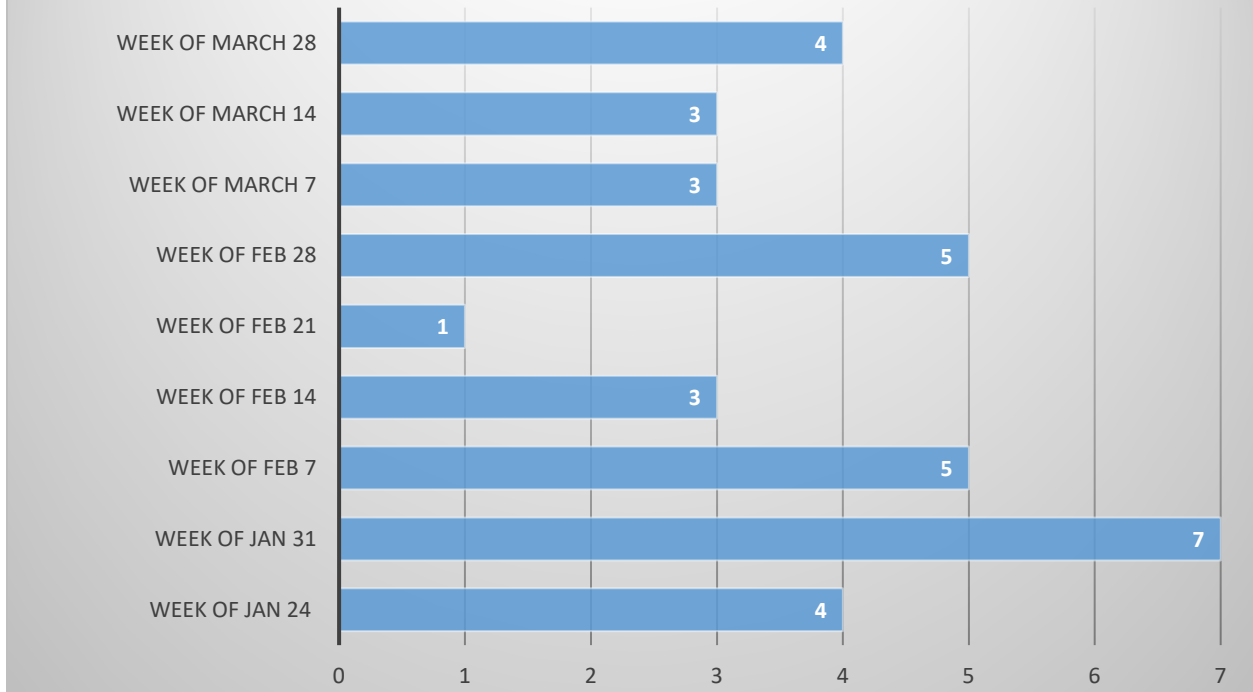
I used my calendar to keep track of the days that I worked out. I also kept track of long days. A long day involves me not getting home till 8 or 10 pm. I took that information and put it in an excel sheet. I also journaled my daily feelings about the day.

My Data (Slides 7-11)

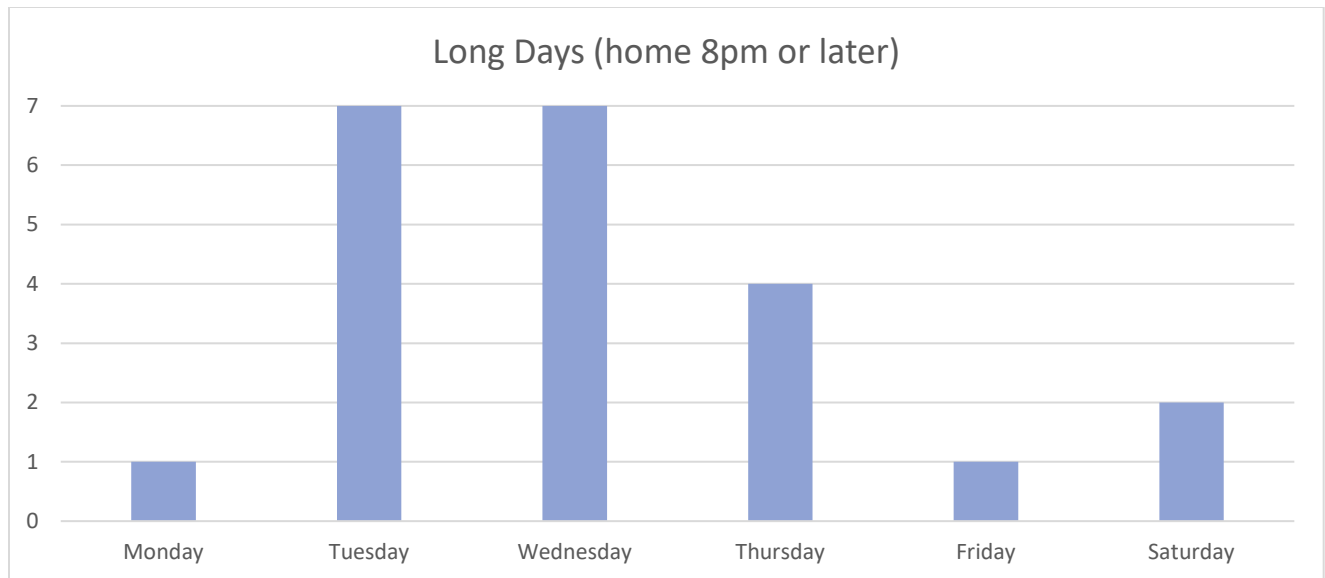
I used the excel spread sheet to analyze my week. The quantitative data is displayed not only in spread sheet format but a graph. I charted how many days I worked out. I also charted the days that were long for me. I displayed that in spreadsheet as well as graph to analyze the data.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	
Week of Jan 24	Y	Y		Y		Y		4
Week of Jan 31	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	7
Week of Feb 7	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	5
Week of Feb 14					Y	Y	Y	3
Week of Feb 21	Y							1
Week of Feb 28	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		5
Week of March 7	Y		Y			Y		3
Week of March 14	Y				Y	Y		3
Week of March 28	Y	Y		Y		Y		4

Amount of days exercised



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week of Jan 24		long	long				
Week of Jan 31	long	long					
Week of Feb 7		long	long	long			
Week of Feb 14		long	long	long			
Week of Feb 21			long	long	long	long	
Week of Feb 28		long	long				
Week of March 7		long	long			long	
Week of March 14		long	long	long			
Week of March 28							



I was able to see on a weekly basis which days tend to be my long days. This information helped to visually see what days that I need to plan to exercise for the week. I also it interesting that Tuesday and Wednesday on all weeks were long days. I know when it comes to Fridays, I am truly tired.

Excerpts from my journal included:

- It was so nice to have the evening free and it's very relaxing. Walked on treadmill.
- Exhausted from the day
- Extremely busy day felt that it was one thing after another. So tired when I go home. I do not want to do anything.
- E-learning day, able to work from home. It felt great to get outside and walk.
- E-learning day completed a yoga class on utube.
- President's Day – It was great to have the day to work around the house. Able to get a few things done around the house. Beautiful day, able to get outside and walk.
- On a Sunday, best thing for me to do is to stay home and relax.
- Stressed about upcoming meeting.
- Stretching exercises help me my muscles relax.
- Glad that I made time for me today, I needed it.

My Discoveries (Slide 12-14)

- Learning Statement One: I MUST be deliberate and take time for my physical health and mental well-being.

I MUST be deliberate and take time for my physical health and mental well-being. I am very much a person that lives by my calendar. I need to utilize that and schedule time for exercise. I found that if I looked at my week, I would plan what days it would be realistic to exercise. I had one week that I only exercised one day. That week my sump pump decided not to run, and I had to work on my basement each night. I was working on the basement, which was workout, but it wasn't my planned exercise. I realized that I couldn't go to the extreme and stress out that I wasn't getting everything done on my list. I also found myself saying to myself, "it will be okay, I must take care of me." No matter the exercise, need to keep moving.

- **Learning Statement Two:** No matter the exercise, need to keep moving. It doesn't matter what type of exercise but doing nothing is detrimental to my physical and mental health.

It doesn't matter what type of exercise but doing nothing is detrimental to my physical and mental health. At the beginning of the project, I was debating on re-joining the YMCA. I debated most of Christmas break. I decided that it was causing me anxiety to think about how to schedule the time. Plus, I would need to pack my clothes and go before or after school. I had no desire to go prior to school due to wearing dress clothes, easier to get dressed at home. I didn't want to go after school due to that causing me to get home later and that would be longer that my dog was by herself. I decided to exercise at home – that would allow me to do after I got home. I tried a yoga class on utube, I found that it wasn't my thing. I enjoyed walking on my treadmill and even a few days walking outside. The best thing I did was stretching. I would work on my breathing and relaxing while I stretched.

- **Learning Statement Three:** I must make myself a priority to be efficient and effective in my role as a principal.

I must make myself a priority to be efficient and effective in my role as a principal. On an airplane its common knowledge put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others. This project reinforced that principle in my own life. I felt better physically and mentally on the days that I exercised. On long days that I didn't get to I would not sleep as well, and my muscles felt tight. I wasn't good at making time on the long days to exercise and the best thing would have been to do a short workout, even ten minutes of stretching would have helped. This project also made me "look at myself." It became intentional to look at myself; is my neck tight, how's my breathing, what is my mood. Reviewing my journal entries and comparing to my daily schedule put in perspective how they are so intertwined.

Where am I heading next Slide (15)

I am going to continue to exercise. I need to keep moving, it helps reduce my stress mentally as well as physically. I can feel stress in my muscles, especially my neck. If I keep exercising than that stress has a way to be released. Now that I am in the 50s club it's imperative to my health. Exercise also helps me sleep better. I can tell the difference when I have been outside exercising versus being inside. I need to be deliberate to add exercise into my weekly schedule. It helped me to see what days were my long days, so I can plan accordingly.

I recently went to get a massage and I struggle with relaxing. The therapist told me to go to my happy place. That took a minute to think, where am I totally at peace. Nature is very peaceful to me. I enjoy walking at our parks. In the past I would take my dog with me, I love her but for me to relax, I need to walk by myself. The therapist also suggested that I had meditation to my regiment. I feel it would be a struggle to relax and mediate but I do believe the stretching and breathing exercises were very beneficial to my physical and mental health.

I need to focus on my feet. Dressing professionally doesn't lean itself to wearing comfy shoes. I have dress shoes that I can wear all day and walk up to 10,000 steps but at the end of the day my feet hurt. I need to forget about the dress shoes and wear my tennis shoes. I went to the Three Rivers Running Company, and they analyzed my walk to recommend what type of shoes would be best. The shoes I purchased does make a difference they are very comfortable and easy to walk in.

I need to continue to keep being intentional regarding making time for me. Just like on an airplane you are to put on your oxygen mask first before you help others. That is so true for me. I am healthier both physically and mentally if I take time for myself. I tend to put work and others before myself, but with planning and being conscious, I will keep looking inside first. I must make myself a priority!