

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** Effect of an Extended Theory of Planned Behavior Intervention on Physical Activity in College Students

**STUDENT:** Taylor Gabler

**DEGREE:** Master of Science in Sport & Exercise Psychology

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Recent research has shown a significant decrease in physical activity (PA) during college, therefore putting students at a higher risk of health complications (Calestine et al., 2017). Gourlan and colleagues (2019) suggested that a two-step intervention that first targets the motivational factors to increase PA intentions and then volitional factors to translate intention to PA behavior may be effective at increasing PA intention and behavior. The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of this two-step intervention among college students. It also aimed to integrate a participant's desire to change using the Transtheoretical Model (DiClemente et al., 1991) and measure PA objectively. Sixty-three college students were recruited from a lifetime physical activity walking course and assigned to one of four conditions: motivational intervention only, volitional intervention only, combined motivational plus volitional intervention, or control. Subjective PA and the Theory of Planned Behavior constructs (i.e., attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, and intention) were measured at baseline, mid-intervention (week 4), and post-intervention (week 7). There was no significant main effect of condition on intention or PA behavior. A significant main effect of time on intention emerged, revealing a decrease in intention from baseline to post-intervention. The time by condition

interaction effect was not significant. Finally, there were no significant differences in intention or PA behavior between participants in the contemplation or preparation stage of the transtheoretical model, compared to those in the precontemplation, action, or maintenance stages. These results suggest that a two-step intervention is unsuccessful at increasing exercise intention and behavior in college students. Limitations of this study include a small sample size and participants meeting PA recommendations at baseline, limiting potential effects of the interventions. Further research investigating the efficacy of the two-step intervention is warranted in a sedentary population.