

Enkeljympa

Aerobics in a Swedish form of exercise for individuals with intellectual disabilities

How it all started

A sports association with the mission to offer “*fun and easily accessible high-quality exercise classes for everyone*” has proven to be an idea that has resulted in a great success! Friskis&Svettis is one of Sweden’s largest sports association with 159 volunteer sport clubs of which 110 of them are located in Sweden, 41 in Norway and the rest is outspread in other countries in Europe. Friskis&Svettis is a sports association that from the start in 1978 offered a Swedish form of aerobics called “Jympa”, but has until now been expanded extensively to a sports association that include various forms of exercise and to some extent gyms. However, the classic workout jympa is still one of the most popular. 51 of the sports clubs offers the workout enkeljympa which can be explained as a form of uncomplicated aerobics. It was developed in 2005 with the intention to fill the need of a workout that was directed toward young individuals and adults with intellectual disabilities. It is a broad target group with different demands and preconditions but with a great need for physical activity and movement. The most important with enkeljympa is to inspire the participants to the joy of movement and community through a workout where each individual can participate according to their own ability. Why the form of exercise became jympa is partly based on that it is an all-round and functional form of exercise, partly to the captivating music that is easy to move to and that it was easy for sports clubs to offer the workout without any need of equipment.

What is the basics of the workout and how is it implemented?

Enkeljympa includes simple movements that train the body's basic functions and contributes to body awareness, posture and balance. The workout lasts about 55 minutes and is conducted normally once a week and in some sports clubs twice a week. The number of participants in the workout range from 15 to 70 with many dedicated participants who goes year after year. Many of the participants have their personal assistant with them on the workouts to provide support and help. Likewise, assistants, relatives or others



Photo: Bilder@BILDBYRÅN

interested are welcomed to participate for free. The workout is offered during the spring and/or fall schedule which depends on the local sports club and continues to be offered as long as there is a continuing need and demand. In some sports clubs occurs the workout in collaboration with the municipality or other organizations for example The Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability (FUB), day center and special schools for people with learning disabilities. The framework of enkeljympa is developed mainly through the governing organization called Friskis&Svettis Riks (National). They are observing how physical training develops in other countries

and the purpose of the training, receive input from sports clubs and instructors and are responsive to the wishes and needs from the target group itself. The instructor who leads the workout has a special dedication to the target group with the ability to create a feeling of security and joy. The instructors normally undergoes three different training courses within Friskis&Svettis in order to become a qualified instructor. Totally are the training courses conducted during approximately nine and a half days, where the last training course includes specific adaptations for the target group regarding e.g. exercise program and content.

The development and the most important

Enkeljympa is growing steadily each year in Sweden since more sports clubs within Friskis&Svettis choose to offer the workout. Apart from Sweden, several Norwegian sports clubs have offered the workout where also great efforts have been made to promote it. The success of enkeljympa has probably favoured the local sports clubs in total though more members, but this is likely not the most important. Rather it is the sports clubs feeling that they have the opportunity, resources and engaged instructors to meet the need to be able to offer a specific form of exercise for this target group with intellectual disabilities. A group of individuals like so many others feel the need of and uses organized physical activity to promote their own health.