

Senior Sport School

A successful sports school for elderly individual's

Introduction to the school

Going to school and being active in organized physical activities may primarily relate to individuals at a younger age, but should age really be a limiting factor for participation in organized physical activity? Today we know that physical activity has a positive impact on the health of elderly individuals and a project in Sweden have found a way how to promote this. Senior Sport School (SSS) is a health and sports school for elderly individuals in Skåne, a landscape in the south part of Sweden. The project was founded in 2009 and is a collaboration between the county council in Skåne, the regional organization Skånesport federation and current municipality in Skåne County. SSS was from the beginning a project but the positive development has resulted in a permanent activity that seems to persist in the future. Today there is a queue for conducting the SSS in the municipalities and there is a queue for participants to take part in the "school". Furthermore, the project has attracted the attention of surrounding sports clubs in Sweden. In other words, a successful project which promotes organized physical activities and health for elderly individuals!

Who is it for and what are the aim?

The target group is men and women aged from 60 years old, with no maximum age limit. SSS is focused on this group of individuals because they tend to be forgotten when it comes to sports context. The goal with SSS is to improve the quality of life and wellbeing, and to create a lifelong joy of movement. In SSS is health-enhancing sports activity (HESA) conducted in an organized form based on what the local sports club has to offer. This implies that participants can try different sports



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and forms of exercise for example tennis, spinning, weight training and karate. Perhaps the chance to try different forms of sports and exercise results in that the participants continues with a physical activity that they find appropriate, fun, and that can be performed in the long term.

How does it all works?

The municipality that organizes a school stands for finances premises, administration and fees. Five of the municipalities that organize a SSS for the first time is funded by the county council in Skåne. It is conducted approximately fourteen to sixteen schools per year. A school includes 25 participants and lasts for twelve weeks with scheduled activities twice per week. Once a week the participants get a chance to try a sport or form of exercise that is offered by the local sports club and at the second occasion there is a theoretical lesson in health. Six to eight local sports club participate in each school that are specifically selected by sports consultants. The mix of different sports and forms of exercise

that the participants engage in is based on the following goals: that there should be something traditional, something which results in a higher heart rate and body temperature, strength training and something challenging that the participants probably have not tried before. The sports association which organizes the sport activity chooses an appropriate leader with knowledge and experience for the specific sport and target group. The theoretical part includes lectures about prevention exercise, practical cooking and CPR training with a defibrillator, and is taught by qualified individuals in their respective theoretical area. For example, the lectures are provided by SISU Sports Education which is a Swedish education organization in sport that include among others physiotherapists, naprapaths and nutritionists.

[What is the successful formula and what happens in the future?](#)

The follow-up that is performed by the participants in the end of a school shows positive results. On average 20 of 25 participants state that they will continue with some form of physical activity after the school. The formula for success does not only depend on that the school include physical activity but also that it contains socializing with other people and that the participants get to learn about health. The future goals for the persons who is responsible for SSS is that all 33 municipalities in Skåne should be able to offer a SSS. Perhaps the SSS will get a wider attention and publicity in the outside world, since the current generally known evidence demonstrates the positive health benefits with physical activity for elderly individuals.