



PHOTOS BY JORDANA FROESE

# Physical education prof links personality and exercise

Stories by Jordana Froese

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Could your personality be the key to how much exercise you do? Dr. Ryan Rhodes, a professor of exercise psychology, has evidence that extroverted people tend to exercise more than introverts.

“I research how your personality and temperament can influence the amount of physical exercise you participate in,” he says of his current studies to predict exercise behaviour.

Extroverts are most comfortable in group activities and prefer the presence of people around them. They seem to exercise more regularly, often beyond their original inten-

tions, and enjoy working out at the gym or being part of a team. Introverts are more likely to drop out of an exercise regime, says Rhodes, and prefer individual activities such as walking.

“I never used to like exercising,” laughs Rhodes, a Vancouver native, “but I was intrigued by the people who would do it every day even if they didn’t enjoy it. I began asking why some people exercise and others don’t and how they stick with it.”

These questions and his own exercise challenges during his BA and MA at UBC, led to a doctoral study at the University of Alberta examining the influence of personality on regular exercise among cancer sur-

vivors. The study compared exercise motivation and personality types of the cancer survivors to the exercise habits of university undergraduates.

“The cancer survivors exercised based on whether or not they actually enjoyed the activity,” he says. “Students are more inclined to do it for reasons beyond pure enjoyment.”

Teaching at UVic has allowed Rhodes to expand his research on personality and exercise traits. A personality-type survey of his students revealed that all have extroverted personalities. “So, in addition to your personality affecting the amount of exercise you do,” Rhodes says, “it could actually define what program of study you go into.”

Rhodes