

Fighting flab through gaming

Given the rising rate of obesity in the UK, video games have come under fire as contributors to an inactive lifestyle.



Nintendo's Wii Fit gaming system challenges conventional wisdom about video games. The exercise game consists of activities designed to lose weight and have fun from the comfort of your living room.

It features a special "balance board" that not only assesses the player's body mass index (BMI), but is fundamental to sensing the position of the player when gaming. Its launch was supported by a huge ad campaign demonstrating people keeping fit.

Wii Fit Plus expands on Wii Fit software with additional tools (such as the Wii movement-reactive remote) and a host of new exercises.

Teaming up pays off

To cement its role as a fitness tool and to bring new people to the gaming category, Wii teamed up with high profile health and diet brand Weight Watchers. The two brands shared similar value with the simple philosophy of "make small changes" - both aim to encourage people to get fit and healthy in a manageable way that fits into your lifestyle. Nintendo aimed to drive sales of the Wii Fit Plus and Wii hardware, using advocacy to create word of mouth amongst people who had not played the games before. Weight Watchers' main objective was to drive membership.

Real Weight Watchers members were used in the Wii Fit Plus ads alongside presenters Ant and Dec; there were product demonstrations at Weight Watchers meetings and on-pack promotion on the Wii Fit Plus bundle offering one month's free membership to Weight Watchers.

Some 76% of people prior to the activity did not own a Wii Fit Plus. Following the sampling exercise at 105 Weight Watchers meetings, 17.3% of members who tried the Wii Fit Plus went on to purchase, and each told an average of 5.34 people about their experience.

Of the remainder who haven't purchased, 80.4% said they were 'Very Likely' to go on and purchase Wii Fit Plus.

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