

Suggested level - B1 intermediate

PEDAL POWER TV TO UPROOT COUCH POTATO

A television set that will only work if children pedal an exercise bicycle to provide the electricity has been invented by researches examining weight problems at a New York hospital.

Experiments involving overweight children aged between eight and twelve showed that those who had to pedal when they wanted to watch their favourite programmes not only watched far less television, but also recorded impressive loss of fat.

The 'couch potato TV' was developed by researches at St Luke's Roosevelt Hospital as a result of growing concern over weight problems among an increasing number of American children.

David Allison, who headed the research, said: "I am not naive enough to think we're going to solve the world's weight problems with TVs hooked to bicycles.

But there are other things we could do that are only limited by our imagination."

Mr. Allison once proposed that people should be charged to travel in lifts in an effort to encourage them to use the stairs.

He said that only 13% of American children were considered seriously overweight, and that the number was growing. During the tests children who had the 'couch potato TV sets' watched on average one hour of television a week, while children in a second 'control' group watched more than twenty hours.

Task 1. Read the sentences and decide which of them best describes what the text is about. (select: no or select: yes)

1. Overweight children watch television more often.
2. Children watch less television if they have to work for it.
3. Children like to combine watching television with physical exercise.

Task 2. Are the following statements true (select: yes) or false (select: no)?

1. The new invention is a television set combined with a bicycle.
2. The aim of the experiment was to measure how much electricity we can generate through exercise.
3. Mr. Allison says watching television limits children's imagination.
4. Mr. Allison tried to discourage people from using lifts.
5. The invention has reduced the number of overweight children in the USA by 13%.
6. All the children in the experiment watched television for twenty hours.