

Attentional focus instructions for therapeutic exercise in people with musculoskeletal disorders. A scoping review

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Abstract

Attentional focus instructions are verbal strategies that could maximize the effects of exercise. The objective of this review was to explore and synthesize the available evidence on the incorporation of attentional focus instruction in the exercise of people with musculoskeletal disorders. A search of 11 databases was carried out until October 2020. Of 4,227 studies identified in the searches, 15 were included. The studies showed deficiencies in the conceptualization and definition of attentional focus instructions. The available evidence indicates that external focus is effective in improving motor learning and function. However, methodological limitations, clinical heterogeneity, the small number of articles included, and new experimental studies challenge the conclusions of the systematic reviews available to date. Attentional focus instructions in musculoskeletal disorders is an emerging field and requires further research. This review is a guide for future studies. © 2021 Sociedad Española de Rehabilitación y Medicina Física

Author keywords

Attention; Exercise; Focus attention; Musculoskeletal disease; Rehabilitation