

Functional Imagery Training FAQs

For practitioners

I work in weight management. How can I learn to use FIT with my clients?

The University of Plymouth is offering two training workshops, one in Plymouth and one in Birmingham. These workshops are aimed at practitioners who work in weight management services or with private clients focusing on weight loss, and who already have experience in person-centred counselling or motivational interviewing.

Functional Imagery Training for weight management

University of Plymouth, Tuesday 4th December – Wednesday 5th December

Functional Imagery Training for weight management

Birmingham. Venue TBA.

Details of venue, registration and cost will be advertised shortly on the University of Plymouth website.

Can I get training in using FIT in other contexts?

We plan to hold training workshops focused on using FIT for treating addiction and for sport and exercise contexts. These workshops are not yet arranged, so please bear with us. When available, details will be advertised on the University of Plymouth website. We are prioritising training in FIT for weight management because this is where we have the strongest scientific evidence.

I am based overseas and cannot attend UK training in FIT

We are exploring online delivery of FIT training. This is an ongoing project and subject to other work pressures so I cannot yet give a date when it will be available. If you are interested in online training, please email jackie.andrade@plymouth.ac.uk with <online FIT training> in the subject line, so we can estimate demand.

Is FIT suitable for my clients?

FIT is designed to strengthen individuals' motivation for behaviour change, increasing their desire for change and teaching them to be their own therapist by applying functional imagery techniques themselves. FIT can be applied in any contexts where lifestyle change is a priority and combined with other treatments, for example Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, to motivate engagement with therapy. We have tested FIT in the following contexts:

Weight management: We have demonstrated the efficacy of Functional Imagery Training for weight loss in a randomised controlled trial conducted at the University of Plymouth. Participants allocated to receive FIT (up to 4 hours of therapist time per participant), lost an average of 6kg at 12months; those receiving the same amount of motivational interviewing lost less than 1kg. The FIT intervention focused only on supporting individuals' own motivation. We offered no diet or exercise advice.

Solbrig, L., Whalley, B., Kavanagh, D. J., May, J., Parkin, T., Jones, R., & Andrade, J. (2018). Functional Imagery Training versus Motivational Interviewing for weight loss: A randomised controlled trial of brief individual interventions for overweight and obesity. *International Journal of Obesity*. doi.org/10.1038/s41366-018-0122-1

Addiction: FIT is currently being trialled in Australia for alcohol dependence. It has been introduced into addiction rehabilitation by Broadreach House drug and alcohol treatment services.

Physical activity: FIT has been used by Plymouth Argyle Football Club to improve athletes' resilience or 'grit'.

Rhodes, J., May, J., Andrade, J., Kavanagh, D.J. (2018 in press). Enhancing grit through Functional Imagery Training in professional soccer. *Sports Psychologist*. Doi:10.1123/tsp.2017-0093

Anxiety: A small scale project on anxiety has shown promising results. We are continuing this line of research.

For individuals

How can I find a FIT practitioner?

Although we have trained some practitioners in basic FIT techniques, FIT is not yet widely known because it is still very new. We have funding from the University of Plymouth to deliver subsidised training workshops for practitioners, to speed up the roll out of FIT in the UK. When this is done, we shall set up a database of licensed FIT practitioners so you can find one near you.

Can I get FIT online?

We do not yet have the capacity to deliver FIT online but we are working on a business proposal to employ a trained counsellor to do this. When this service is available, we shall advertise it through the University of Plymouth's webpages and social media.

Are there other ways I can access FIT?



Yes. We have just launched a free app that delivers a version of FIT. Fitz™ guides users through setting goals and practising functional imagery. It is already available through the Google Play store and will be launched for iOS in October 2018. We welcome your feedback on Fitz.