

RECRUITING & RETAINING LESS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Promoting Ultimate to New Players

- Steer clear of using imagery of elite level players. Instead show as wide a range of body shapes, cultural backgrounds and abilities as you can. If you have resources to do so, make a short video showing the game being played.
- The key messages should be encouraging and positive. Focus on the fitness and social aspects of taking part.
- Seek out organisations to partner with, eg: large workplaces in the area, local sports clubs in their off-season, community health providers. A successful partnership involves both parties offering up something to the other. For example, approach a local yoga studio about encouraging your club's members try their sessions, and the studio's clients coming to try ultimate.
- Consider paid promotions on Facebook and Instagram. You can target the ads based on gender, age and locality. A \$25 campaign run over a week can reach 3,000-4,000 people. Video posts get more attention than picture posts. If you have a short video, consider a Youtube ad as well, as that can also reach a specific audience – a \$40 investment can get around 1,500 views.
- Marketing channels must extend beyond those already engaged with the sport. Relying on a Facebook post being shared will not reach very far.
- Social media is most effective in outer suburban and regional areas. For inner suburbs of major cities, networking and partnerships are more valuable.

Designing Your Sessions

- Having new participants be put straight into a game of ultimate can be very intimidating and overwhelming, so you should have a separate session specifically for newer players.
- Think about the timing of these sessions – while running adjacent to existing offerings may suit your club, it may not be convenient for those you are trying to target.
- Playing on a smaller field can greatly increase the variety of venues you can use.
- While having a low commitment model can appear to be enticing, it is better to have a registration process. This gives your offering some formality, allows you to have their contact details on hand, and reduces the time potential participants will take to make a decision on committing and attending.
- Use game-based activities rather than drills. Ensure that the focus of the games is on personal achievement and skill progression, rather than competition.
- If the group is relatively inactive, a structured warmup is important. Netball Australia have published some simple routines that are designed to minimise the risk of ankle and knee injuries - <https://knee.netball.com.au/recreational/>

Managing the Experience

- The deliverer is the most important person in your program. They control the atmosphere in a session and the social cohesion within the group, which are the most important elements in participant enjoyment and retention. The deliverer does not necessarily have to be a good ultimate player. What is important is that they are empathetic, confident, good communicators, fun and engaging. They also should actively seek feedback, and be prepared to act on it.
- The deliverer must have the ability to modify activities on the go to suit the number of participants, the level of their physical ability and the weather conditions. Some examples are making the space bigger/smaller, adjusting the objective of the activity, or increasing/decreasing the number of participants that are active at once.
- How mistakes are treated is a crucial part of a first time participant's experience. Not only by the deliverer, but by other participants as well. The deliverer should encourage participants to discuss challenges and fears openly, and frame mistakes as a step on the path to competency. During games or game-based activities, turnovers should be accepted as a normal part of gameplay.
- Reward achievements, even the small ones!
- Fear of the unknown is a large barrier for less active participants. Where possible, you should contact them before their first session and give them as much information as possible – how to get there, where to park, what to wear, what to bring, and an outline of what activities they can expect.
- If you don't have a deliverer as such (for example, it is a club training or pickup game), you should designate one person (or more) who acts as the welcoming officer for new participants to speak to when they get there. If you are able to, send participants the name and photo of this person beforehand. The welcoming officer should approach the new participants (rather than waiting for them to come), ensure they are prepared for the session and, if appropriate, gauge their level of physical ability. The welcoming officer should also talk to the new participants at the end of the session to invite them back for the next one – a follow up SMS/email can provide extra encouragement!

