



# Nursing report example

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## Sample report

Here is the sample report of a Health Contract by Trish Gray. This has been presented with comments to identify important points about report writing in general. For the purposes of making the structure and academic expectations explicit, the original format has been changed but the original wording of the report remains unchanged.

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### TRISH GRAY—HEALTH CONTRACT REPORT

#### Introduction

This health contract ran over a six-week period and resulted in a significant degree of success and self-discovery. My goal, to walk for 40 minutes per day, three times per week was easily met and exceeded by week four. Maintaining this success has been the most difficult aspect to deal with, and progress here has been limited by a variety of factors, not all of which were within my control.

### OUR COMMENTS

72 words

The introduction could be improved by including:

- a statement about the importance of the topic in relation to health
- a statement of topic/focus of the health contract, that is that she wanted to achieve higher energy levels and lower stress levels
- a brief overview of the structure of the report

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#### **NOTE:**

The use of 'I' and 'my' is acceptable in this report because it is a report on your own program. It is preferable in academic writing to remove *yourself* from the writing. If you wanted to say:

Based on what I have read in the literature ...  
(Hackly 1999; Yong 1998)

I think that you would take out the use of 'I' and rather write it as:

It appears that ... (Hackly 1999; Yong 1998).

## Evaluation

It is always difficult to fit another activity into an already overloaded schedule and by adding 40 minutes per day to the needs of family, university studies, and part-time work, problems were inevitable. It was difficult to even think about in the first three weeks as can be seen in Appendix 1, however I did manage to maintain my diary, which was not always easy.

I continually considered ways to increase my exercise through daily activity, like climbing stairs and parking the car further away from my destination.

Maintaining my exercise pattern was and still is the most difficult challenge. My greatest success was during the mid-semester break (Teaching Break) as I could walk at a time that fell into my personal rhythm—early in the morning. This had the added benefit that I was not even missed by the family. I was able to set a new goal of walking at least 50 minutes per day, 5 or more days a week. When trying to motivate myself in the evenings, which have traditionally been family time, I felt guilty leaving even though they were more than supportive of my goal. This problem re-emerged after the mid-semester break (Teaching Break) when once again exercise became a challenge to fit into my day. The difference now is that I am feeling the benefits of a break where I was walking daily, eating well and enjoying family time. My higher energy levels and lower stress levels can be seen in Appendices 1 and 2.

This result has motivated me to continue with my contract and work out strategies to balance my day more effectively.

Returning to university was not the only negative affect on the maintenance of my goal. There were problems at home, beyond my control, which made focusing on my goal difficult.

### Factors that facilitated or hindered my health contract

There is overall agreement that exercise plays an important role in relieving tension and releasing the chemical build up in the body caused by stress. Walking was my choice of exercise as I find it enjoyable and felt that I would not have problems maintaining focus on my goal. This is recommended by many researchers (Schafer 1992; Kirsta 1988; Workplace Video Productions 1990). It is an excellent way to find time to be alone (Schafer 1992) and (Ali 1988), hence I did not seek a walking partner as suggested by Schafer (1992). This decision also removed the potential for further stress, which can come from competing with others. I need to remain focused on how I was, how I am, and how I want to be (Adams 1989).

Schafer (1992) studied college students and found that even a small increase in exercise has beneficial effects on mood and energy levels. This has made me look carefully at times during

302 words

First sub-heading

A more explicit statement of results could have improved this section; for example, that the energy levels increased in weeks 1–3 and the stress levels decreased initially.

Line 5 of the first paragraph shows good use of referring reader to supporting evidence in the Appendices.

Again Trish has referred the reader to supporting evidence in the Appendices

754 words

This section on 'walking' provides a good general discussion and analysis of what the findings mean. But it would be better as part of the next section called 'Evaluation' because it is not about a factor that facilitates or hinders Trish's health contract.

Here the hindering factor is identified.

the day when I can be more active as part of my daily life. Schafer (1992) also found that 5 or more exercise sessions per week provided optimum results in improving energy levels and mood, and because of this I was encouraged to walk more.

After reviewing my progress over this 6-week period, it is clear that the main blocks to maintaining my goal while at university are time-management and prioritising. Firstly, I need to accept that my exercise is a priority. One statement by Greenberg (1983) has helped greatly. He stated that it was people who say that they do not have time to meditate, are those who really need to. I found this easy to apply to a need to exercise and have used it as a motivator. Adams (1989) recommends the use of affirmations as another form of motivation which are statements declaring where we wish to be now as if it has already happened. For example, 'I have time and energy to walk every day'. The influence of this is to inspire positive thought. This is a useful addition to Greenberg's statement.

To ensure that our lives are balanced, we need to balance our time evenly between work, rest and play (Schafer 1992; Kirsta 1988). Leisure time is essential to ensure balance. This suggests that my walk should be a priority, weighted as heavily as family and university commitments. Although helpful, more work in thinking along these lines is important for complete success.

Schafer (1992) and Adams (1989) discuss the need to use the time of day when we have the greatest level of energy. Adams (1989) refers to this as using your unique cycles, using the energy you have at a particular time of day, while resting at times when energy is lacking. It is important not to work against your natural energy. This is how I maintained my goal during the mid-semester break (Teaching Break), as my energy levels peak in the morning, and I was not hampered by having to catch a bus at a given time. Schafer (1992) sees this as ideal, but also says that you should maintain your exercise program even when you do not feel like it.

Adams (1980) provided helpful information. Firstly, we need to find and maintain supportive relationships. This was useful but I did not use it enough to my advantage. Also it is important to build on early success, being open to new information and avoiding any idea that there is only one best way. Being successful in the mid-semester break (Teaching Break) was extremely motivating and kept my mind open to new information.

Although I did originally think that I would use Greenberg's (1983) idea of rewarding myself, it was no incentive to overcome my time-management problems. I did not feel that

Trish links her own investigation into her health closely with the evidence she found in the books by Adams (1989) and Greenberg (1983) she referred to in preparing her for her contract and assignment.

This section on 'Factors' could be improved by integrating the word 'factors' throughout and linking with words like:

*One factor that facilitated the success of the program was the choice of type, time, amount ...*  
*Another factor ...*  
*and so on*

using his punishment follow-through would work for me either because of the negative connotations.

Schafer (1992) was reassuring when I failed to exercise. He states that practicing moderation, gradualism and patience and not quitting even though you miss a session or two can help success. Adams (1988) and Schafer (1992) believe that people need to take responsibility for their own health. Schafer (1992) adds that we need to accept responsibility for our poor organisation or for trying to do too much and stop blaming others. This would be supported by Adams (1989) who believes that we make choices and should choose to look after our own well being. This I need to focus on more as I have still not taken complete control.

### **What would I change?**

Should I repeat this contract I would firstly set my goal at 5 or more 50 minute walking sessions per week as recommended by Schafer (1992) to attain the maximum benefit. The planning I do for my university work would be extended to include my walk and other leisure activities to ensure that my time is effectively balanced and that my exercise is a priority. Within my planning, I would include realistic time allotments for everything I list, and block out time for exercise, making myself unavailable for anything else but that. Because my energy levels are greater in the morning I would try getting up earlier. I would work on avoiding negative self-talk and would focus on the positives, walking even though initially when I may not want to. I would remind myself, that being tired in the evenings is not physical in my case, and that exercise can often replenish energy (Schafer 1992). To assist with positive thinking I would try affirmations, 'I have time and energy to walk every day'.

It has been suggested that having support from others is helpful. I did not make much use of this but would communicate more with my family and friends should I repeat this exercise. This would help with motivation and reminders of my goal.

Finally, and most importantly, I would direct my attention to being responsible for my health and well being and would avoid blaming others for my responsibilities.

### **Conclusion**

Although this contract is officially finished, I do intend to continue with it as I was greatly motivated by my success during the mid-semester break (Teaching Break). I have discovered the areas where I need to alter my current behaviour, especially in the area of time management where I have to alter my thinking towards it, planning for balance not simply to complete my university work. Overall it has been clear that even small changes in lifestyle can be both complicated and difficult.

245 words

One of the recommended changes to improve this assignment is to change the sub-heading from a question to 'Changes to the Health Contract'. It is not generally a good idea in an academic paper to use questions as sub-headings

This conclusion could be improved by summarising what she found, what it meant, and what changes she would make in the future

## Reference list

Adams, J 1989, *Stress: a new positive approach*, Newton Abbot, Sydney.

Adams, J D (ed) 1980, *Understanding and managing stress: a book of readings*, University Associates, San Diego.

Greenberg, J S 1983, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, *Comprehensive stress management*, Wm C Brown, Iowa.

Kirsta, A 1988, *The book of stress survival: how to relax and live positively*, Unwin Paperbacks, London.

Schafer, W 1992, *Stress management for wellness*, Harcourt Brace College, Fort Worth, Toronto.

Workplace Video Productions 1990, *An Easy Guide To Stress Management*, Victoria.

All sources of the information you cite in the report are acknowledged in the reference list.

Alphabetical list of authors

Harvard referencing system used

Note: At the time, these sources were acceptable, however, you should generally not use references that are older than five years.

**Appendix 1**

<b>RECORD OF EXERCISE, STRESS LEVEL AND TIREDNESS (WEEK BEGINNING: 22 / 3 / 99)</b>				
<b>DAY</b>	<b>Incidental Exercise or Activity</b>	<b>Timed Sustained Exercise</b>	<b>Stress Level</b>	<b>Energy Level Continuum and Factors Affecting Energy</b>
<b>Mon</b>			<i>Low</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Slept well and studied all day at home
<b>Tues</b>	Shopping (approx 40 mins) carrying a heavy backpack	Walk from bus 10 mins. Walk to bus 10 mins	<i>High</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Up at 5.30 am and at uni all day
<b>Wed</b>	Shopping—1.5 hrs, washing, made tea etc	Walk from bus 10 mins. Walk to bus 15 mins	<i>High</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Exhausted – no evening study as falling asleep in chair
<b>Thurs</b>		Walk from bus 10 mins. Walk to bus 10 mins – very heavy backpack	<i>Low</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Up at 5.30 am – uni all day
<b>Sun</b>	Worked all day with a R-2 class Active all day	Walked 10 mins in 'Come out parade'	<i>Medium</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Son's birthday party 5–9.30 pm
<b>Sat</b>	Washing and house cleaning		<i>High</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Too tired to keep on feet by the end of the day
<b>Sun</b>	Washing, cleaning the car, general home duties including ironing		<i>V High</i>	<b>LOW .....X..... HIGH</b> Studied – far too tired to walk

**Note: The student submitted SIX copies of this grid representing the 6-week program.**

