Rowing machine-armchair hybrid keeps seniors fit in their living room

While laying back in front of the television may be infinitely more appealing than a rigorous work-out for many, we've seen a couple of innovations attempting to combine the two. The UK bed-and-breakfast Cottage Lodge already encourages guests to power their televisions with an exercise bike, and now the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany has created the GEWOS, an armchair with a built-in rowing machine and health monitor that enables elderly people to stay fit in their living rooms.

On the outside, the seat looks like a standard armchair and can be used as such. However, the arms can be folded out to reveal rowing machine oars and the base provides foot support. Sensors fitted inside the chair monitor the heart-rate, blood pressure and weight of the user, analyzing the data over time to suggest if they need to be doing more exercise. Sitters can see the data on a tablet PC fitted into the arm of the GEWOS and use it to plan their exercise schedules. The armchair has been specifically designed for elderly housebound people who otherwise may not have the opportunity to keep themselves fit, and the researchers have tested the product among 100 senior citizens who ranked it in first place among 14 alternative products.

The designers hope to add gamified elements to the chair in the near future to further motivate older people to keep exercising, which can have numerous health benefits. Are there other ways to ensure less mobile seniors get the exercise they need?

Website: www.fraunhofer.de
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