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New FitDesks at Dacus Library Combine Reading and Cycling

Winthrop University

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New FitDesks at Dacus Library Combine Reading and Cycling

Quick Facts

- Dacus recently bought two FitDesks, joining colleges and universities around the country in offering their students the chance to read and cycle simultaneously.
- The stationary bikes, which are light and collapsible, are located on the first floor near the reference desk so staff members can monitor their usage.
- Studies show that exercise increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain and improves cognitive functioning.



Jeneah McBride, a biology major from Buffalo, New York, tries out a FitDesk at Dacus Library.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA - As Winthrop University students head into spring semester finals, **Dacus Library** has provided a good way to encourage studying and exercising at the same time.

Dacus recently bought two **FitDesks**, joining colleges and universities around the country in offering their students the chance to read and cycle simultaneously. The stationary bikes, which are light and collapsible, are located on the first floor near the reference desk so staff members can monitor their usage.

The **FitDesks** are fitted with a desktop so students can work on a laptop, read a book, or play video games while pedaling, according to **Michaela Volkmar**, Dacus' outreach librarian. The bikes also have resistance bands to strengthen the upper body.

Studies show that exercise increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain and improves cognitive functioning.

"This is a great way to increase physical activity during a time when most students would normally be sedentary," said **Janet Wojcik**, an associate professor in exercise science. "Breaking up long periods of inactive time is one way to increase physical activity throughout the day in a meaningful way."

Researchers have found that long periods of sitting, despite even regular exercise, are likely detrimental to health, Wojcik said. "The FitDesks are a great way to decrease sedentary time while students can still feel they are being productive in studying. The students should likely feel more refreshed than stressed during and following the use of the desks," she added. "It's a great initiative by Dacus Library!"

Winthrop's **Academic Success Center** staff have helped promote the FitDesk concept and have displayed the bikes in their center in Dinkins Hall. "I feel these desks provide a healthy, brain-based way for students to "exer-study," said **Director Michelle Wolf**.

As little as 30 minutes of aerobic exercise 2-3 times a week has demonstrated improvement in cognition.

Colleges are increasingly interested in the FitDesks because they don't take up much space,

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according to [Inside Higher Ed](#). Clemson University, another South Carolina public institution, has used the FitDesks to conduct several studies on the effect of exercise on academic performance.

For more information, contact **Judy Longshaw**, news and media services manager, at 803/323-2404 or longshawj@winthrop.edu.

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