Physical Fitness Plan

Introduction

Physical fitness involves activities that address strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, and body composition. The following activities address all five of these components, with an emphasis placed on cardiovascular endurance. This is a key component in improving one’s health and maintaining a healthy body composition.

These activities are designed to be used over a ten day period using one activity per day. This cycle can then be repeated providing an organized and effective plan for fitness.

Two important principles of exercise should be incorporated into the implementation of these activities. These are the principles of preparation for exercise and progression.

Preparation

A warm-up is a whole body activity designed to raise one’s body temperature in preparation for exercise. Before beginning any of the activities listed a warm-up activity should be performed. Easy warm-up activities include walking, marching, or jogging as well as basic calisthenics. Even low levels of dance could be used for the warm-up activity. The Health Songs CD for grades K-2, and the Workout Songs CD for grades 3-8 provide warm-up activity ideas as well. The warm-up should not be strenuous, and should last from five to ten minutes. At that point the body is ready for more rigorous activity.

Progression

The second principle of exercise that should be incorporated is that of progression. The body adapts best and with least risk of injury, if a slow and steady progression of exercise demands are incorporated into the fitness plan.

The goal of performing one activity per day for ten days should not be achieved during the first two weeks of implementation, but rather as a goal of the program. This goal should be achieved from a reasonable progression of activity.

Initially one may use the activities at a frequency of three times per week, preferably every other day. This may include an initial schedule of five minutes of warm-up, followed by 5 minutes of activity. Progression would then dictate increasing the time on a weekly basis. Depending on the activity you may increase it 3-5 minutes per week until a total of thirty minutes of activity is achieved. The more strenuous the activity is, the slower the rate of progression. At this point your next progression would be to increase the frequency from three days per week to five days per week. Thus, you would eventually reach the goal of one activity per day for ten days. This cycle would then iterate every two weeks. You could then change the order to produce variations in the cycle. A sample chart of this progression is illustrated on the next page.
Five Components of Health-Related Fitness

Before you can implement an effective fitness plan, you should have a basic understanding of the five components of health-related fitness.

**Cardiovascular endurance** is the ability of the heart and lungs to function efficiently over time without fatigue. Activities that improve cardiovascular endurance involve continuous whole body or large muscle group movements.

**Muscular endurance** is the ability of a muscle or group of muscles to work continuously without fatigue. Improvement in this area involves using a muscle in repetitive movements.

**Muscular strength** is the ability of a muscle, or group of muscles, to produce force during one maximum contraction. Improvement in this area requires near maximum exertion, or use of a muscle or muscle group.

**Flexibility** is the ability to move a body part freely, without pain around an articulation of the body. Gentle stretching or taxing of one’s range of motion will result in improved performance in this area.

**Body composition** is the amount of body fat compared with lean mass. Generally speaking, a healthy body is made up of mostly lean tissue. Body composition is a result of diet, exercise, and genetics. Changing the order in which you perform the activities will provide variations in the cycle.

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Sample Progression Chart (m = minutes)

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Activity 1: Fitness Day

Health-Related Fitness: muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance

Formation: Students form two lines facing each other or a large circle.

Description: Cards are made in advance with an exercise and picture illustrating the exercise written on them. They can include some or all of the following.

- Planks
- Leg Raises
- Table/Crab
- Donkey Kicks
- Sit-n-Stretch
- Open/Closed Pike
- Pointer
- Flyer (half)
- Flyer (whole)

Reach for the Sky
Activity 2: Fitness Circuit

**Health-Related Fitness:** muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance

**Equipment:** two-four jump ropes, posters or cards naming each station spread throughout the playing area (See the diagram.)

**Formation:** Stations are set up as illustrated. Students are in pairs.

**Description:** Students have one minute at each station. Stations consist of partner push-ups, partner sit-ups, jump rope, leg raises, planks, seated toe touches, jumps in place, hops in place, jumping jacks, arm circles. You may have one to two pairs of students per station. The teacher instructs the students to perform as many of the exercises as possible for one minute. After a minute the students rotate on command to the station on their right.

Activity 3: Push-up Day

**Health-Related Fitness:** muscular strength, muscular endurance

**Equipment:** none

**Formation:** Students face the teacher in parallel lines, shoulder to shoulder. Students should have an arm’s-length distance between them.

**Description:** Students perform 3-10 repetitions of each type of push-up:

- **Standard push-up**
- **Triangle push-up:** Hands are held below the chest in the form of a triangle.
- **Wide push-up:** Hands are held outside of the shoulders.
- **One foot push-ups:** Students lift up the right foot while doing the push-up, then lift up the left foot on the next one. Students keep alternating their feet as they perform the push-ups.
- **Plyometric push-up:** Students push hard off the ground and clap hands before placing their hands back on the ground.

- **Partner push-ups:** a) One partner kneels on his/her hands and knees perpendicular to the partner. The partner rests his/her feet on the back of the kneeling partner to do the push-ups.
  b) Partners are positioned head to head with about a two-foot space between them. As they do a push-up simultaneously they give each other a high-five, first with the right hand and then the next time they come up with the left hand.

Activity 4: Crab Soccer

**Health-Related Fitness:** muscular strength, muscular endurance

**Equipment:** one crab soccer ball or other large ball

**Description:** Students are divided into two teams. Two goal lines are marked on the playing area. Students are in crab position and must remain so throughout the game. A crab soccer ball is placed in the middle of the playing area and teams are instructed to kick the ball past the other team’s goal line to score. Students must stay in crab position. The game continues until a designated number of goals are scored or a designated time limit is reached.
Fitness Activities (continued)

**Activity 5: Par Cours**

Health-Related Fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility  
Equipment: four jump ropes  
Formation: A course is organized as illustrated with each station marked with a cone, and a diagram poster.  
Description: Students are in pairs or groups of four. Upon the start command, the students jog to each station and complete the assigned tasks. The teacher can require one or more laps. A large class may be split in half, with each half completing one lap and then alternating with the other half.

**Activity 6: Nuclear Meltdown**

Health-Related Fitness: muscular strength, muscular endurance  
Equipment: a pin for every three players  
Formation: The class is divided into groups of three spread across the space.  
Description: Players join hands to make a circle. A pin is placed in the middle of the circle. This pin contains radioactive material and must remain standing. Each student has ten points to start the game. Students will continue to hold hands and try to pull each other into the pin, knocking it down. Students will resist to avoid a meltdown. The student who knocks over the pin is penalized one point. The pin is reset and the game continues until a time limit is reached. The student with the most points wins. Groups can be changed throughout the lesson.

**Activity 7: Intervals**

Health-Related Fitness: cardiovascular endurance  
Equipment: one whistle, several cones  
Formation: Several single-file lines are grouped together but spread slightly, as if beginning a race. Use a running track if available or mark cones on a field or gym to trace a large circle.  
Description: Upon hearing the whistle blow once, students are to begin walking around the circle. When the teacher blows the whistle twice in succession, students are to jog until they hear the next whistle sounds. When the teacher blows the whistle three times in succession, students are to run until they hear the next whistle sound. The teacher varies the whistle commands, paying attention to student fatigue and temperature conditions.
Activity 8: Jumping Jack Relay

Health-Related Fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance

Equipment: none

Formation: Divide the class into several groups of 5-7 students. Mark a starting line and about 20-30 feet from it a turnaround line. Students are in single file behind the starting line.

Description: At the command the first student in each line is to run to the turnaround line, touch it, and run back to his line, slapping hands with the next person in line. Then that person iterates the task. Students who are in line waiting are to do jumping jacks. The first team to have each member touch the line and come back while continuously doing jumping jacks is declared the winner. They can then pick the next exercise to do while their teammate is running. Examples would be push-ups, toe-touches, knee bends, arm circles, and so on.

Activity 9: Monster Tag

Health-Related Fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength

Equipment: none

Formation: This is a tag game with two groups of two students being designated as “monsters.”

Description: The pair of “monsters” must hold hands or lock elbows while chasing others. If a student is tagged by the monster, that student becomes part of the “monster” by hooking elbows or holding hands with the group that tagged the student. The game continues until all are tagged.

Activity 10: Group of Threes Tag

Health-Related Fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength

Equipment: none

Formation: Divide the class into groups of four. Three members join hands to form a small circle. The fourth member is standing outside of this circle. That student is “it.”

Description: Designate a number for each member of the circle (1-3). Call out a number. That student is now the target that “it” is trying to tag. On command, the student outside of the circle (“it”) will attempt to tag the target. The group holding hands will collaborate to try and protect the target. After a specified time, roles are switched.