

Let's Get Physical

Segment 1

Purpose

To determine the importance of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle

Background

Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Many people today do not get enough physical activity in their daily lives. People spend much of their day being inactive, either sitting at their jobs or at school. Cars or buses have replaced walking and bicycle riding as the common types of transportation used to get from one place to another. This inactivity can lead to serious health risks. The President's Council on Physical Fitness recommends approximately 60 minutes of exercise per day for children under 18 years. Studies show that daily physical activity can help lower the risk of heart disease and obesity. People who are physically active tend to have more energy and a better body image. They are better able to deal with bad stress and overall are more relaxed. Physical activity can help tone muscles, burn extra calories to help lose weight, and can help control your appetite. Physical activity is also essential to healthy bones. Even light to moderate physical activity is better than no physical activity at all. The benefits of physical activity are great and can help you enjoy life more fully. Finding physical activities that are challenging but fun will help develop lifelong fitness habits.

Materials

Physical Activity worksheet
(page 20)
pen or pencil
markers
poster board

Procedure

1. Use the Physical Activity worksheet to survey people about their physical activities. Ask people that you know what physical activity they participate in most often and why and how many minutes a day they are physically active.
2. In the chart on the worksheet, record their responses.
3. To graph your results, first determine the categories of the various physical activities given. Categories might include sports, leisure activities (walking, running, shopping), no activity, and so on.
4. Create two graphs. **Example:** The first graph might be a pie graph that shows the types of physical activities in which people participate. Be sure to include those inactive people who responded "no" to physical activity. The second graph might be a bar graph to show the reasons why people are physically active.
5. Calculate the average number of minutes of physical activity performed by the people surveyed.
6. Share your results with your class or partner.
7. Create a class graph of all results and calculate the average number of minutes of physical activity for all people surveyed by the class. Find the mean, median, and mode.
8. After looking at the results, discuss the overall physical fitness level of those surveyed. Are most people who were surveyed getting enough physical activity?
9. Conduct research to learn more about the benefits of physical fitness.
10. Based on your survey and what you have learned about the importance of physical activity, create a poster, PowerPoint presentation, or a 30-second public service announcement to explain the importance of physical activity to a healthy lifestyle.

Discussion

1. Based on your survey results, how much value do you think people in your community place on physical fitness?
2. What was the most common reason people you interviewed chose to become physically active?
3. What are some of the benefits of physical activity?
4. How do you feel about physical activity?
5. What are some popular activities students can do to improve physical fitness?

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Extensions

1. Monitor your own physical activity for a week. Keep a log of all the activities you do. To track how you feel before and after physical activity, create a scale. Use this scale each day to indicate your overall feelings (energy level, attitude, and so on). Be sure to record your scores. After a week, take a close look at your activities. Are you physically active on a daily basis? Do you need more physical activity? Brainstorm for ways to add more physical activity to your life. The following week, try adding some of your ideas into your normal routine. Continue logging all your activities for the week. After a week, did you notice a difference in the way you felt? What are you going to do to make sure that you are more physically active on a daily basis?
2. Contact the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, the American Heart Association, a local physical fitness center, or your family doctor to learn more about physical fitness and its importance. Create a report on your findings.
3. Learn about a pedometer and explain how to use physical activity. Use this instrument to monitor physical activity.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

Are you physically active? Yes or No	If yes, what physical activity do you do most often?	If yes, why are you physically active? (To look good; to be healthy; to feel good, to firm muscles, to lose weight, for enjoyment.)	How many minutes a day are you physically active?	How many times a week are you physically active?