

P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL FITNESS PLAN



“Fitness isn’t about building a better body. It’s about building a better life.”

Jillian Michaels, American personal trainer, businesswoman, author and television personality

INTRODUCTION

Being physically fit has both immediate and long-term health benefits. Regular activity can improve quality of life, including improved skin health and body tone; strengthened immune system and reduced risk for chronic diseases; weight loss; it can even increase energy levels and improve mood as well as help with relaxation and sleep quality. When physically fit, the body simply works more efficiently and effectively.

Being physically fit is also linked with academic success. There is growing neuroscience evidence showing a connection between exercise and academic performance. A personal fitness plan may help achieve these benefits.

Most fitness plans include:

- Cardiovascular/aerobic exercise
- Muscular strength/resistance training
- Flexibility exercise



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Engaging in physical activity is safe for most people, however, doctors suggest a routine physical before beginning any fitness program.

An effective plan starts with identifying why you are creating a plan. Beginning with the end in mind. Is the goal to lose weight, improve body tone or strength, build cardio endurance, live a healthier life style, or get ready for a marathon? Knowing the answer to this question will help create a plan that will target results.

Be specific about achievements and measuring success: target dates and specific events. Goals should push past the comfort zone and yet still be attainable.

Calculating and recording the following baseline metrics may provide a good idea of aerobic and muscular fitness, flexibility and body composition, it will also be informative in comparing progress on the way to reaching your goals.

- Taking your pulse rate before and after you walk 1 mile
- Timing a 1 mile walk
- Counting the number of pushups you can complete
- Measuring your waist circumference
- Finding your body mass index
- Finding your target heart rate
- Monitoring how many steps taken in a day, many apps track this



GETTING STARTED

Put your plan in writing. A written plan may encourage you to stay on course. Sharing your plan with your physical education teacher or engaging a friend to share the challenge may help with follow-through accountability and meeting your goals.

If your goal is to lose 5 pounds, you first have to show up and to get started, sometimes as little as one sit up at a time. Start slowly from whatever point you are at and build up over time. Give yourself time to warm up and cool down from your workout plan with slow-paced walking and gentle stretching. Increase your pace as your stamina improves.

Goals should be challenging but attainable. Listen to your body-don't push yourself too hard.

Varying activities (cross-training) can help keep the interest level high. By varying your exercise types, you'll also reduce your chances of injuring or overusing one particular muscle or joint.

Select a pair of athletic shoes that are well fitting and provide good support. Workout clothes should be comfortable. Try to avoid fabrics that don't breathe.

AEROBIC/STRENGTH/FLEXIBILITY

Aerobic Training

Walking is one of the simplest and most available aerobic exercises.



The intensity can be varied to match the fitness level. And, walking can be done most anywhere: outdoors or indoors (malls, indoor tracks, or a treadmill). This makes walking easy to continue throughout the year.

Cycling is another type of aerobic exercise with wide appeal and significant value. Cycling can be done on a stationary or standard bicycle. Cycling may be ideal for individuals who, due to orthopedic issues, are unable to walk for an extended period of time. It helps the heart with less mechanical stress on the back, hips, knees and ankles than walking may cause.

Ski machines, stair climbers, steppers and elliptical machines can also provide a good aerobic workout. These machines may prove to be too strenuous to be enjoyable for some beginners. The advantage to the machines is that they are indoor activities which can be used year around.



Swimming is an excellent aerobic exercise. For the exercise beginner, or non-swimmer, it might be a difficult activity in order to maintain the appropriate intensity for at least 30 minutes. Water aerobics and water walking are an alternative.

Jogging and aerobic dancing can be beneficial exercises. Both can be done indoors, which makes them year-round activities.

Strength Training

Incorporating strength training into the plan can provide benefits such as increasing bone strength, muscles, and connective tissues such as tendons and ligaments.

Strength training can also help increase muscle mass. As muscle mass builds, basal metabolic rate will increase, making it easier to maintain a healthy body weight.



Strength training can be done at home or in the gym. Push-ups, pull-ups, abdominal crunches and squats build the lower body. Barbells and dumbbells are classic strength training tools and resistance tubing can also be used.

Trying to lift something that is too heavy can be dangerous and cause damage to the skeletal and joint structures.

Flexibility Training

A key part of any fitness program includes stretching. Stretching increases flexibility and helps to restore joint motion. It helps to protect against pulls and tears, a warm muscle stretches better than a cold muscle.

Popular stretches:

Standing Side Stretch

Stand with feet together and arms straight overhead. Clasp hands together, with fingers interlaced and pointer fingers extended. Inhale as you reach upward. Breathe out as you bend your upper body to the right. Take five slow breaths. Slowly return to the center. Repeat on the left side.



Bound Angle

Sit on the floor with legs straight. Bend knees and bring the soles of your feet together, letting your knees drop toward the ground. Hold your shins as you inhale and stretch your chest upward. Exhale as you hinge forward from your hips, without rounding your back, and place your palms on the ground. Hold for five slow breaths.

NUTRITION

Following a good nutrition program is essential to supporting a strong fitness plan. Our bodies need energy and nutrients from food to work efficiently. A healthy diet provides energy to fuel workouts.

Many nutritionists suggest:

- Making half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Making half the grains you eat whole grains
- Choosing fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks



- Choosing lean sources of protein
- Comparing sodium in foods like soup and frozen meals and choose foods with less sodium
- Eating some seafood

WRITTEN PLAN

Write down your specific goals, include measurements that define success. For example, run a 4 minute mile in one month. Break those goals down into three categories: Cardio, Strength Endurance and Flexibility (Stretching). Next to each category, list the activity you will engaged in, the intensity/count of the activity and the time you need to devote to reach your goals. Set up your plan in a table format by week and log your progress each time you complete a workout. Remember to also record your baseline metrics the first time you work out.

A few weeks after you've started your program, compare your plan to your weekly logs. If you're not meeting your fitness goals, you may want to increase your exercise schedule or change routine. If however, you're meeting your goals, great work! You may want to increase your goals or take your plan to the next level or you may want to adjust to a maintenance routine.

To learn more about personal fitness plans you can visit the following websites:

www.free trainers.com

www.sportsmedicine.about.com/cs/conditioning/a/aa012402a.htm