

Fitness is FUN!

Goals:

- *Students will discuss the importance of cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility*
- *Students will practice these three types of exercise*

Audience: 3-5th

Lesson:

Leader: When you hear the word exercise, what do you think of? (running, sports, lifting weights etc).

Leader: Exercise is simply moving your body for an extended period of time.

Leader: We all have heard that it is important to exercise, but do you know why?

Leader: Exercise helps your body stay healthy! It strengthens your heart, lungs and muscles. It helps you feel energized, prevents disease, and enables you to maintain a healthy weight. Also, exercise is fun! Kickball, swimming, riding your bike are all examples of exercise; can you think of other fun ways to exercise?

Leader: Today we are going to talk about 3 different types of exercise and why it is important to do all three! First, there is cardiovascular exercise. This is the type of exercise that gets your heart beating fast and often leaves you short of breath. Cardiovascular exercise or 'cardio' helps strengthen the most important muscle in your body- your heart! The stronger your heart, the easier it is to do its job. In one day, your heart pumps over 2000 gallons of blood, and that blood travels over 12,000 miles! To build a strong, healthy heart, you should exercise at least 2-3 times per week for 20 minutes. Can you think of exercises that we can do to get our hearts pumping?

Leader: Before we get moving, everyone find their pulse (show carotid pulse point). When I say go, count the number of times your heart beats in the next 15 seconds. If you multiply that number by four, that is your resting pulse, or the number of times your heart beats in one minute while at rest.

Everyone stand up! Stand in ready position, legs slightly bent and hands out to your side, palms facing up. You're going to shift your weight to your right foot, then left foot, alternating as fast as you can while your hands stay extended out at your side (think of a defensive basketball position). Have the students perform this exercise for 30-45 seconds.

Now let's try a different exercise. Stand up tall and pull your belly in. Now bring one knee up to a 90 degree angle, switch legs. Continue to alternate your legs as fast as you can (for about 30-45 seconds).

We'll try one more exercise. Squat down like you are about to sit in a chair, now jump up as high as you can. Repeat 10 times.

Now find your pulse again. Let's count the number of times it beats in 15 seconds. Is your number higher than your resting pulse? How do you feel? Do you have a burst of energy? Remember, you should get (at a minimum) 20 minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least 2-3 times per week.

Leader: The next type of exercise is strength training. Strength training helps build strong muscles throughout your body, supports good posture, and helps you maintain a healthy weight. Having strong muscles in your back and abdomen, your 'core' area, helps your body stand up tall and also prevents you from falling and hurting yourself. Have you ever stepped on ice and felt like you were going to fall? Did you notice that when you felt the unstable ground, your body, especially your stomach tightened up? This is an example of your 'core' working hard to make sure you stand upright and don't get hurt.

Can anyone think of exercises that help build strong muscles? (Pushups, planks, lunges, squats, crunches etc). You don't need to lift heavy weights to build a strong body. Using just your body weight, you can build strong muscles.

Leader: Let's practice a few exercises that you can do to keep your muscles strong!

Let's try a lunge. Stand one foot in front of the other so that your feet are about 2 ½ to 3 feet apart. Slowly lower your rear leg until it is about 3 inches from the ground, or until your front leg is at a 90 degree angle. Make sure your knee does not extend too far in front of your toes. Try this 10 times on each leg.

For your upper body and core, let's get in plank position. Place arms directly under your shoulder, straighten out your back and tighten your abs. Your body should be parallel to the ground. Hold this position for 15 seconds. If you're feeling strong, try doing 5 pushups!

Aim to work your muscles at least 2 times per week for 10-15 minutes.

Leader: Now that we've exercised our hearts and strengthened our muscles, we are going to end our lesson with some flexibility exercises. Stretching helps lengthen our muscles, prevents injury, and helps us 'stay loose'. You should stretch only after you've warmed up your muscles.

Are you ready to get loose?

Everyone stand up nice and tall. Place one arm behind your back. Now take your other arm and reach around and try to clasp onto your other hand. Hold this position for 30 seconds and then try the other arm.

Now let's reach to the sky, slowly bend forward, and try to touch the floor, hold this position for 30 seconds. Now slow roll your body up, and take a nice deep breath! AHHHHH! You can sit back down. Stretching feels so good! You can stretch your muscles every day; just remember it is important to warm up first!

Leader: Today we learned about the importance of three different types of exercise:

1. Cardiovascular exercise helps build a strong heart
2. Strength exercises help build strong, sturdy muscles
3. Flexibility exercises help lengthen and 'loosen' our muscles.

All three types of exercises are important for a healthy body!