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McClure

Midterm

Physical fitness is very important, vital to Physical, Social, and Mental well-being. Physical fitness, by the dictionary.com definition, is “being in shape or in condition “ In my words I believe that a person who is physically fit is someone who takes good care of their body and themselves, exercising, eating well and even just making time for some fun. The four main components of physical fitness are aerobic fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition. Some people in America don’t understand the importance of being healthy and all the benefits. Millions of people are affected by the downfalls of poor physical fitness, one being Obesity. 73% of the U.S. population is overweight or obese, according to a recent survey. Obesity is a serious health risk today, raising chances of getting heart disease, diabetes, or many other dangerous illnesses. In order to raise awareness and prevent, high school P.E. curriculum requires students to learn a lot about being in shape.

Aerobic or cardiovascular fitness is one of the more basic and well-known aspects of physical fitness. Cardiovascular fitness, cardio- meaning heart and vascular referring to the circulatory system, is “The ability of your heart, lungs and organs to consume, transport and utilize oxygen.” It is very important to maintain and improve for many things. For heart health, or any type of sport, being in shape aerobically is incredibly important. Take soccer, for instance, if a player was out of shape aerobically they wouldn’t be able to run up and down the field as fast or as frequently because their heart was not prepared to pump the amount of blood and oxygen needed. A person with bad cardiovascular fitness would be slow just going up and down the stairs at work. Aerobic fitness has many benefits: burning calories quite rapidly if the exercises

are performed right, lowering blood pressure, making cells more sensitive to insulin (diabetics require less insulin injections), and decreasing resting heart rate, anxiety, and depression symptoms. Cardiovascular fitness can be beneficial to not just athletes, but heart attack victims, diabetics, obese people, and many others. Aerobic fitness can be improved by running, swimming, jogging, dancing, almost any type of sport, lots of things. The average person should do aerobic exercise “3 to 5 times a week for 20 to 60 minutes at a time”, according to ‘wikifaqs.com’. They offer memberships at local gyms that are quite inexpensive (ranging from \$20 to \$100), aerobic workouts are offered at local gyms and YMCA (ranging in prices), and it’s completely free to take a long jog down the road. There are many opportunities to get aerobically in shape. If people don’t do these activities often it could really affect their health physically (heart, lung, and weight problems) but also emotionally they could become depressed. When people do aerobics, or exercise in general, their brain releases endorphins, which is the chemical that stimulates happiness. Aerobic fitness is extremely beneficial both mentally and physically. It is important for all types of people, young and old, to maintain good cardiovascular fitness to be physically fit.

Another key component of physical fitness is muscular strength and endurance. The definition of muscular strength is obvious, how strong the bodies muscles are, how much they can lift. Endurance means “the measure of a person's stamina or persistence”, athletic endurance, I feel, is how long a person can withstand a physically daunting exercise. Endurance is important to maintain and improve for many reasons. It has many mental and physical benefits, like all exercise. For one the body burns calories faster because when the muscle mass is increased, the metabolic rate is increased. Having good fitness in this area gives individuals more energy, less stress, improves posture, and helps prevent or lessen the severity of diseases such as diabetes,

heart disease and cancer. Muscular strength is important to maintain for sports, such as basketball, for running up and down the floor or stealing the ball. But it is also important for everyday tasks such as opening a jar or changing a tire. Risks of not having enough fitness in this aspect are vast. One example of the effects is weaker bones at old age, weight lifting and endurance activities improve bone density, so they are less likely to break later on. According to livestrong.com, “Added muscularity can help lead to a longer and better life.” There are multiple opportunities to improve muscular strength and endurance. Go on a long jog through town, get up early and come to the school for open weight room on any weekday (free), purchase a gym membership (for twenty to one hundred dollars), go online or in any sports magazine and find exercises, such as squats, that you can perform with your own body weight, or buy lifting weights (costing anywhere from five dollars or surpassing fifty). There are numerous, simple ways to improve your muscular strength and endurance, a vital part of physical fitness.

The flexibility of a person is the “ability of your joints to move through a full range of motion,” according to ‘about.com’. Flexibility can also be put as a person’s physical motion range or ease of motion. Flexibility isn’t as obvious of a component of physical fitness as the other aspects, but it really is important to maintain and improve for many things besides athletics. There are a wide range of benefits: better posture, reduces muscle soreness and lower back pain, improves muscle coordination, improves athletic performances, and decreases risk of injury. Flexibility can really benefit people in the long run. It makes everyday tasks simpler, for example, bending down to pick up the remote. There are many opportunities to improve flexibility. Yoga classes are a fun and calorie burning way to improve your flexibility and overall fitness, the local gym offers classes once or twice a week ranging from twelve to sixteen dollars per lesson. Another way to improve flexibility is basic- just stretch! Stretching is simple, not that

time consuming, and very stress relieving. It can be done anywhere, a few times a week, and is free, just do a few toe touches on lunch break and overtime there really will be a benefit.

Flexibility is really, very important for physical fitness.

Body Composition is the amount of fat, muscle and other various things that make up your body. According to 'moveit4.org' it is "the breakdown of your body make-up, i.e. fat, lean muscle, bone and water content." Body composition is dependent on the other aspects of physical fitness and genetics. Good body composition is important to maintain and improve because it effects self confidence and can lead to chronic diseases if you lack it. If a person has better body composition, fat and muscle distribution, they look better and also have the benefits of exercise, talked about above. Exercise and good nutrition is vital to good body composition. Exercise controls muscle mass, body health, and burns the calories from food. And food (nutrition element) gives the body nutrients, vitamins and energy to build muscle and fat. They directly affect body composition. Sometimes certain people have to work harder to have a healthy body than others because of genetics. For example, a person from a physically fit family is likely to have better habits and genetics than someone from a more overweight family. Body composition, not weight, is important because it is the real measure of how physically fit a person is.

I think Physical Fitness, including all the components, is all equally important. They affect physical, mental, and social health and quality of life. People who do have good physical fitness should know the benefits and those who lack should also know, in order to improve their health and know the importance. I think that I have good physical fitness for my age. I have been raised in health conscious, active family that knows about fitness and I'm proud of that. I also play sports (Soccer, Basketball, AAU Basketball and Track) and in the off season, over summer,

I go jogging often and work out a few times a week. Sports have made me realize how important it is to stay in shape and I have given me confidence and helped me make lots of new friends. I try to maintain a good diet of fruits, vegetables, protein, dairy and all of the food pyramid things, but I'm a teenager and do eat junk food, only in moderation though. I think I have exceptional cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength and endurance due to sports. A few years ago I realized that I needed to improve my flexibility because it affects my athletic performances, so every morning when I wake up, for the past 2 years, I have been doing yoga to improve it. I have noticed the positive effects of it (now that I can actually touch my toes!) but I still think I can improve more. I also feel that I have good body composition, but everything can be improved. Down the road as sports get more competitive I hope to build up my fitness in all area. When I graduate high school I plan on continuing to eat well and go to the gym. I think physical fitness will continue to be important to me throughout my life, as it should for everyone. It is important to teach others the benefits of physical health, especially now, American's are failing to realize the vitality. More people should take the initiative to get in shape, and benefit from the many positive impacts. Physical fitness can control quality of life; it is a quite essential to happiness and health.

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