How Do You Choose a Physical Activity? Lesson Idea

Objectives

- Recognize that exercise can enhance body composition and self-concept.
- Identify and understand the social, cultural and psychological factors that influence exercise.
- Recognize the contributions that physical activity habits make to heart health.

Prepare

- Download and copy How Fit Am I? Activity Sheet for class distribution.
- Have one or more video cameras available, if possible.

Materials

- How Fit Am I? Activity Sheet
- Video cameras (if available)

Explore

1. Ask students to complete the How Fit Am I? Activity Sheet.

2. Discuss the different forms of physical activity in which students participate. Encourage them to mention more unusual forms of exercise, such as martial arts, dancing and gymnastics, as well as bicycling, skating and organized sports. Ask students which elements of fitness—muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance—are promoted by each activity they named. Point out that doing different physical activities that develop a variety of muscles and promote all the elements of fitness is called cross-training. Ask students to evaluate whether the activities they regularly pursue could be considered cross-training. Do their activities develop a variety of muscles? Do they promote all the elements of fitness?

3. Participating in plenty of physical activities usually isn't a problem for people your age. But sometimes kids do have concerns about sports or other kinds of physical activities. For example, maybe your parents want you to join a baseball team and you don't enjoy baseball. Or maybe you would rather do something like read or work on your computer instead of being physically active. Maybe you find sports boring or don't have time for physical activity. Some people have an illness or other disability. Have you ever run into problems like these?

Have each student write on a sheet of paper a problem or concern about physical activity. Collect the papers and read several aloud, allowing their authors to remain anonymous. Encourage the class to discuss the problems and offer helpful suggestions for each situation. Use the discussion as an opportunity to stress that students can choose the type and amount of physical activity they do. The important thing is to choose some kind of physical activity and do it regularly.

4. Have students create an exercise video or exercise television program. Groups of five or six students can develop plans for an exercise program that will appeal to students their age. Students might first view exercise videos or exercise programs on cable television networks and discuss their content. Explain that the video may take several forms: a “magazine” format in which students demonstrate or report on various physical activities; an in-depth look at one sport or physical activity, such as in-line skating; or an aerobic exercise program demonstrated by all members of the group. If video cameras aren't available, each group may simply present its program to the class.