

Staying Fit

Each day, we have a list of things we want to do and things we need to do. We go to school, do homework, do chores around the house, get together with friends, and spend time with our families. It's not always easy to find time for exercise. What are some ways people stay fit? Playing sports is a good way to get regular exercise. You and your friends may belong to a sports team. But not everyone plays a team or individual sport.

Here are some ways to work fitness into your everyday life:

- Stretch when you have a few minutes between assignments in class.
- Challenge yourself to work a little faster, reach a bit higher, or bend a little farther when doing chores at home.
- Ask a family member to park a little farther away from the store so you can walk together through the parking lot.
- Offer to take a younger sibling on a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood. You can get some exercise and help out family members at the same time. Better yet, see if you can get one of your parents to go with you. They need exercise, too!
- Ask your friend to walk with you or do something else that's active while you talk during lunch or breaks at school.



List three more ways to add a little more exercise to your day.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Challenge: Think about exercise-related activities that could be incorporated into the school day. It can be something as simple as lifting a book overhead 20 times or bending and stretching between classes. Encourage each other to be creative and think of realistic things.

Option 1: Work with a group to create a presentation for other classes to encourage people to add a little more exercise to their day and stay fit while at school. Each person in the group can make a drawing on a piece of plain white paper or a small poster. Put several of these together for the presentation or use presentation software on a computer.

Option 2: Make a set of *Exercise Reminders* posters that can be displayed around school to encourage fitness.



Interval Training

A large part of being fit is our ability to be active. When we are healthy, our heart and lungs carry oxygen efficiently to all parts of our bodies. This, along with eating healthy foods, gives us energy to do the things we need and want to do.

People exercise to maintain physical fitness. There are many different ways to exercise. Often people **warm up** before they exercise. This means they do some types of movements at a less intense level than the actual activity. For example, before playing soccer, you might jog around the field once or twice or toss or kick the ball around a bit.

We can improve our fitness by doing different kinds of exercises. Sometimes people combine more than one activity into one exercise session. This is called **interval training**. It means you trade times of intense activity with lighter activity. For example, you might kick the ball around the track once, then run around the track once, and then kick the ball the third time.



Class Activity

1. Try a short interval activity. Alternate marching in place, a lighter exercise, and jogging in place, a more intense exercise. Switch activities every one or two minutes for a total of six minutes.
2. Brainstorm four more interval activities that can be done in the classroom. Do one each day for a week.

Interval Activity 1: March in place and then jog in place. Repeat.

Interval Activity 2: _____

Interval Activity 3: _____

Interval Activity 4: _____

Interval Activity 5: _____

Name _____

You Are a Fitness Machine!

The concept of fitness, or “getting in shape,” may bring to mind an image of a gym. Many gyms have fitness machines to help people do a variety of exercises. Fitness machines use mechanical energy supplied by the person using the machine. People use these machines to build endurance and muscle. For example, many people use treadmills to walk or run for extended periods of time. Since the treadmill is stationary and inside, it doesn’t matter what the road conditions or the weather is like!



Think about fitness machines you have used or seen in pictures or in a gym. They involve lifting, pushing, pulling, walking, running, or riding. What activities do you do each day that use similar movements? Write your ideas on the chart.

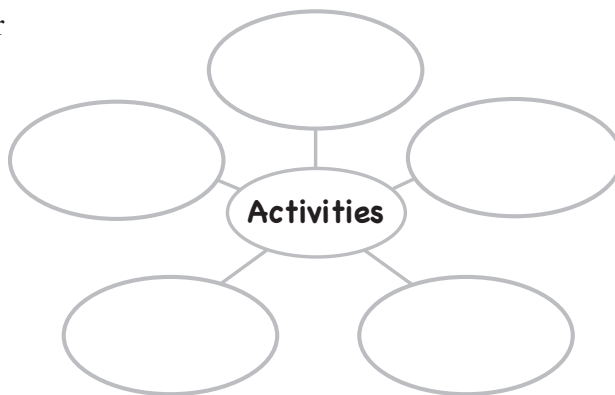
Lift	
Push	
Pull	
Walk	
Run	
Ride	

Challenge: Think of a way your body is like a machine. Explain.

Fitness Survey

One way to get ideas for exercise and fitness activities is to find out what other students like to do. Do they walk everyday? Dance? Play on a team? Ride a bike or skateboard?

1. On a separate piece of paper, draw a web with your own activities.
2. Form small groups and brainstorm things you have done this week to stay active.
3. Combine the information to make a group "Fitness Survey" chart like the one below. Use tally marks to represent each person in each group.
4. Post all the groups' findings in a common area and review the data.
5. Note which activities were common, and which ones were more unusual.
6. Is there an activity the whole class can do? _____



Fitness Survey				
Activity	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4

Extension: Create a new class chart or grid to show the exercises done the following week. Keep listing new activities and add tally marks, stickers, or other markers each time the activity is done. Remember to include things like walking or riding your bike to school and P.E. or recess.

Compare the activities for the two weeks and discuss your results.

Case for Fitness

Many elementary and middle schools have a physical education program. Students have P.E. one or more days a week. One elementary school has a unique fitness program. One day a week, fifth-graders play the role of “youth trainers.” First, they take a fitness test. They learn about the test so they understand it before helping other students work their way through it. The youth trainers record peers’ scores in fitness tasks to improve endurance and muscle strength. They take notes when other students participate in aerobic exercises.

The youth trainers lead activities to help their classmates improve in specific fitness areas. The other students play the role of “clients.” The trainers work with teachers to set up fitness stations. At each station, one or more trainers explain to the clients (students) the fitness focus at that station. Trainers guide their clients through the activities at each station. Students rotate through the roles so that everyone has the opportunity to be a client with a fitness trainer and to train others.



At the end of the term, all students take the fitness test again. Students compare their fitness scores and reflect on the success of the training. Trainers and clients may make suggestions for improvement for the next term. The school also has a running club. The club meets two mornings a week before school. Students run around a marked track. Parents or other family members may also run. Members of the club receive a running stick every time they complete a lap. One hundred sticks equals 10 miles. When a student has completed 10 miles, he or she receives a “foot” token. Tokens are also awarded for marathons (26 miles) and super marathons (100 miles).

Now that you’ve read about how one school emphasizes fitness, think about your school.

1. What is one thing your school does to emphasize fitness? _____

2. What might you or your class do to encourage people to make fitness part of their lives? _____

Challenge

1. Divide into four or five groups. Each group will devise a fitness station and learn more about the proper way to do each task or action required. For instance, when stretching, you should move slowly and try not to bounce. If doing a runner’s lunge, your knee should not move forward past your ankle.
2. Set up the stations with personal “recording sheets” for each participant. Have each person record his or her “starting ability” and then keep his or her sheet for recording new information each time.
3. Set a goal to practice one task or skill daily for a week and record the information. At the end of the week, see if the daily practice has led to improvement.
4. Add new stations as time allows. Consider having students take turns being “trainers,” too.