



Session 4: Exercising Regularly

Learning Goals

Students will learn about their bodies' reactions to exercise and will create an exercise routine to share with others.

Materials

- Letter to My Body, copies (see Resources)
- Food and Exercise Logs (see Resources or use journals)
- Music (optional)

Warm Up

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Facilitator introduces today's theme, Exercise. Exercise means moving our bodies to stay healthy.

Alphabet Stretch—Depending on students' age, work as a large group or in pairs. If working in pairs, assign two letters of the alphabet to each pair. For example, Pair 1 would be assigned A and B; pair 2 would have C and D, and so on. Ask each pair of students to be creative and develop one stretch or physical movement that represents their letters. Each pair will teach the group its movements. Then, as a whole group, go through the alphabet of movements, A–Z. Continue practicing and speeding up the movement routine to get students exercising and having fun. You may want to incorporate music into the movement activity to help students keep the same pace and enjoy themselves.

Debrief: Why Does This Matter?

How did my body feel during the Alphabet Stretch?

Did it feel uncomfortable to move my body in new ways?

How did my breathing change? Did it speed up?

Work Out

Estimated Time: 35 minutes

Context: How Does This Impact Me and Others?

Students will begin learning why exercise is important (it keeps hearts healthy, builds strong muscles, gives us energy, relieves stress, etc.), will exercise together and discuss ways to encourage others to make exercise part of their lives.



Activity: What Can I Do?

- With your group, generate a list of activities that count as exercise. (The list might include activities like walking, running, skating, jumping rope, swimming, climbing lots of stairs, playing tag, walking to school, etc.) Explain that students should exercise for at least 30 minutes on most days.
- Facilitator asks students to share what they know about muscles. Remind students that our bodies are made of muscles. Exercise makes our muscles strong. Muscles are important because they pump blood through our bodies and give us energy. Our heart is the muscle that pumps blood to all of our organs. We can feel our heart working by feeling its beat. The beat is called our pulse.
- Students check their pulse, by placing their hands flat on their chest and counting the number of beats they feel in 10 seconds. Facilitator asks students to share their numbers. Facilitator asks students what they think will happen to their pulse after they exercise.
- Play Foot Fire— Ask students to imagine that their feet are on fire and that they need to move as fast as they can to stamp it out. Students stand on tip toes with their hands on the back of their chairs. Facilitator says “Go!” and students run in place for 30 seconds, as fast as they can, stamping out the fire. Then, students place their hands over their hearts again and count its beats for 10 seconds. What happened?
- Students generate a list of exercises that they can do at home. Examples include: dancing, jumping jacks, running in place, sit ups, push ups, lunges, neck rolls, stretches, kicks, arms and shoulder rolls.
- Students create Food and Exercise Logs (see Resources), a record of students’ eating and exercise to be filled in each week. This log will help students to become aware of their habits, to replace unhealthy with healthy behaviors, and to track their progress. Keep students’ logs in the classroom for use during future sessions.
- Exercise together. Play Simon Says using simple exercises, or dance Chicken Noodle Soup or Peanut Butter Jelly Time, dances that feature shuffling, swinging arms, and pantomiming of the songs’ lyrics.
- Students discuss how they will teach others about exercise. Ideas include: playing games like Foot Fire with family and friends, encouraging others to walk up stairs, walking and dancing together.

Cool Down

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Reflection: What’s the Big Picture?

A Letter to My Body—Students reflect on the theme of the day, Exercise. Using the Letter to My Body worksheet (see Resources), students will write letters to their bodies, individually or as a class. Students may also draw a picture of their healthy self.

Lesson Extensions

(Optional)

Family Exercise Hour—Work with students to design a family exercise hour, where family members are invited to an after-school session to work out with the class.

Spread The Word—Students may use poster paper to create advertisements about healthy eating and exercise and hang the posters around the school to encourage other students to make healthy choices. Posters may be about different food groups and how many servings we should eat from each, or about suggested activities for exercise. Encourage students to be creative and think of ideas and slogans to make healthy eating and exercise fun.