



PROJECT LIFE

Creating lifelong connections for youth.

A partnership with and funded by VDSS.

Whole Health and Exercise

Youth will be able to identify specific exercises they can perform to enhance their health through physical activity. Youth will also be able to identify the components of “whole health” and identify the key nutrients the body needs and describe their function and importance.

Health and Nutrition

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Whole Health and Exercise

<i>Skill Focus</i>	Youth will gain an understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices that support their whole well-being and learn how to make positive changes in their nutrition and physical activity.
<i>Group Size</i>	Up to 15 youth
<i>Time Required</i>	90 minutes
<i>Materials Needed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flip chart or whiteboard - Magazines - Glue - Scissors - Markers/pencils - Poster board - <i>Exercise Choices Worksheet</i> - 5-10 lb. Medicine Balls (2-3 depending on group size) - <i>Dynamic Stretching Worksheet</i> - <i>Circuit Training Workout Handout,</i> - <i>Static Stretching Worksheet</i>
<i>Adapted From</i>	<i>Come and Get It!</i> : Nutrition and Physical Activity for Lifelong Health

Introduction to Whole Health	10 minutes
Collage	25 minutes
Exercise Choices	10 minutes
Stretching and Circuit Training Workout	40 minutes
Closure	5 minutes
 <i>Optional Activity:</i>	
Introduction to Meditation	15 minutes

Introduction to Whole Health (10 minutes)

Materials: Flip chart paper/whiteboard and markers

State that today youth will learn about the components of whole health (*pertaining to all components of health: physical, emotional, social, spiritual and mental*).

Write on the board/flip chart the word “health” and underneath it write “*physical health – health pertaining to the physical body*”. Ask the group “What are some other components of health?”

If the youth do not respond ask, “In what different ways can we be healthy?” If they are unable to answer, write down the rest of the components, explaining each one as you write it down.

Answer key:

Emotional health - health pertaining to a person’s emotions

Social Health - health pertaining to the life and relations of human beings in a community

Spiritual Health - health pertaining to the spirit or soul of a person

Mental Health - health pertaining to the mind).

Explain that the idea of whole health is that there is more to staying healthy than just not being sick. When we think about our physical, emotional, social, spiritual and mental needs, we are taking care of the things that contribute to our overall health and well-being.

Collage (25 minutes)

Materials: Magazines, glue, scissors, markers, pencils, poster board

Explain that the youth are now going to create a collage of all five components of health. Explain that they will be working in two groups (or three groups if there are more than 12 youth.) Each group will create their own collage. Divide the group in half (or thirds).

- Show youth the supplies you have brought in to use: magazines, glue, scissors, markers, pencils and poster board.

- Let youth know that they can decide how they want to organize the collage depicting the five components of health: physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual. Ask them to write these five labels on the poster board.
- Have youth look through magazines to find examples of people participating in activities that promote each component of health.
- Have the youth cut out the pictures and paste them to the poster board based on how the words are arranged on it. If needed, jobs can be designated within each group.
- Have each group share briefly what they came up with and display the collages on the wall at the end of the activity.

Once the collages are displayed, ask youth if it is possible to be healthy in one component and not in another component of health. The intention is for youth to understand that we can be healthy in one area of life and not healthy in another area and that a positive goal is to work on becoming healthy in all of the components of health. Explain this by giving examples, such as a star football player who might be depressed.

Exercise Choices (10 minutes)

Hand out the *Exercise Choices Worksheet* to the group.

Explain that youth will fill out a questionnaire about exercising so that they can be aware of the choices they have each day. When youth are done, have them share their answers.

Stretching and Circuit Training Workout (40 minutes)

Dynamic vs. Static Stretching

Pass out the *Dynamic Stretching* and *Static Stretching* handouts. Explain the difference between dynamic and static stretching.

Why do we perform stretches in the first place? Our goal with stretching is to lengthen the muscle and surrounding connective tissue in a safe and effective manner. This will help us improve our joint Range of Motion (ROM) which will subsequently help us minimize our risk of injury.

There are two main methods of flexibility training. This is where we come to the classic static stretching vs. dynamic stretching comparison.

We'll start with **static stretching**. During this type of stretch, you want to take a specific joint (i.e. your shoulder joint) through a ROM to a comfortable end point. You want to hold this stretch for about 20-30 seconds. Static stretching will help you overcome the stretch reflex- this is the automatic tightening of a muscle you feel when you stretch. The muscle usually relaxes after roughly 20 seconds.

Advantages of Static Stretching:

- Very safe
- Can be done in any environment without any equipment
- Can be used by anyone

Disadvantages of Static Stretching:

- Only improves flexibility at a specific body position
- Not effective for those wanting to increase flexibility in multiple ROMs

Next, we need to take a look at **dynamic stretching**. Dynamic stretching uses dynamic movements to take a muscle through its *full range of motion*. When performed correctly, dynamic stretching warms up the joints, maintains current flexibility and reduces muscle tension. This method of stretching is best prior to any activity that is movement-based.

Advantages of Dynamic Stretching:

- Extremely useful for people warming up for an activity that requires wide ROM (i.e. athletes), especially when speed is involved

Disadvantages of Dynamic Stretching:

- Not safe for everyone. Should be used only by those who have been shown the proper movements
- Injury is more common during this type of stretching technique

It is important that we perform dynamic stretches **before** a workout and static stretches **after** the workout. Studies have shown that static stretching before a workout deactivates muscles and makes them weaker. This is not what we want prior to resistance training.

Circuit Training Workout

Materials: 5-10lb medicine balls (2-3 depending on size of group)

Pass out the **Circuit Training Workout** handout. *Note: The facilitator should become familiar with the handout and ensure that the stations are set up prior to the workshop.*

Explain that youth are now going to participate in an exercise activity that will address the physical component of health.

- Explain that circuit training is a high-intensity workout in which you rotate between stations. At each station you perform a different exercise. Circuit training is a great way to increase your strength, burn calories, and get a full-body workout done quickly. Also, these workouts can be done anywhere: at the gym, at your house, or outside.
- Talk about the importance of warming up by stretching (*to extend a muscle to full length*) before doing **Dynamic Stretching Handout**.
- Explain to the youth that now that we are warmed up we are ready to exercise. Let youth know that the medicine ball is not for playing with, only for doing the specific exercises. Emphasize being safe while doing the exercises, so they won't hurt themselves. It's possible to injure a muscle if the exercise is done incorrectly, so it's very important that they do the exercise exactly as demonstrated. Refer to the **Circuit Training Workout** handout.
- Instruct youth to choose a station where they will begin the circuit training. Explain to the youth that they will perform the exercise assigned to each station for 30 seconds, and will have a 1 minute break between each station. Once they rotate through each station and return to the station where they began, they will have a 2 minute rest. Repeat this process 3 times.
- Demonstrate each exercise for the youth while referring to the **Circuit Training Workout** handout. Once they feel comfortable with each station, begin the first circuit. (Each station for 30 seconds, and 1 minute rest in between) Make sure to go around and help the youth as needed.
- Now after completing our exercises we need to do some **static stretching** to help the muscles maintain our range of motion and help the muscles to repair themselves by increasing blood flow to those areas. Lead the group in some static stretching while referring to the **Static Stretching** handout.

Final Thoughts (5 minutes)

Ask youth to name the components of whole health, and give an example of each and the benefits of performing circuit training workouts. Remind youth to stay healthy and active by finding an exercise they enjoy.

Optional Activity: Introduction to Meditation (15 minutes)

Materials: Breathing in the Moment handout, chart paper or dry erase/chalkboard

Another way we can take care of our bodies and minds is through meditation.

Ask youth: Why is meditation practiced? Write their responses on the board.

Discuss some states of being or characteristics that meditation can help with: lack of focus, anxiousness, distracted, anger, tired, sleepy, feeling sick and feeling stressed. Ask youth to discuss some areas from this list that they may identify with or feel in their own lives.

Explain what meditation is (*continued or extended thought, reflection or spiritual contemplation*) and tell youth they will practice some breathing exercises. Ask what they think of when they hear the word *meditation*. Explain that meditation can include contemplation, insight and focused intention into relaxing the body and calming the mind, among other things. (*Note: Explain that there are many different ways to meditate and they may hear of some of these ways in their lives.*)

Then explain that practicing meditation regularly can help with the states of being they identified earlier:

- More energy
- Improved quality of sleep
- Decreased anxiety
- Improved concentration/less distracted
- Increased alertness
- Heightened immunity
- Calmness
- Less prone to violent behavior
- Better able to adapt to stress
- Improvement in academic performance

Explain to the youth that at this time we will close the session with meditation. If possible dim the lights, play some soft music, and explain that this is something they should take seriously. Read the ***Breathing in the Moment*** meditation to the youth.

After the activity, ask the youth what they experienced and if it helped them relieve stress, anxiety, etc. Encourage them to continue finding ways to relieve stress throughout their week.