

## The Benefits of Exercise

**Pillar: Active Living**

**Division: III**

**Grade Level: 7-9**

**Core Curriculum Connections: Language Arts**

### I. Rationale:

A healthy body and a healthy mind are inextricably linked. The benefits derived from regular exercise are all encompassing, affecting the overall health of the body, the mind, and the spirit. Exercise is one of the most powerful, yet simple ways to maintain one's physical, emotional, and social well being. With adolescents leading more sedentary lifestyles every day, exercise should be promoted at every possible turn. This Language Arts lesson presents the opportunity to highlight the positive impact of exercise while having students practice the skill of discerning a message's point of view in an article advocating the benefits of exercise for teens.

### II. Activity Objectives:

*Students will be able to:*

- describe the physical, mental, and social health benefits of regular exercise.
- identify ways to incorporate regular physical activity into their lives on a daily basis.
- recognize the message of an article and be able to interpret its point of view.

### III. Curriculum Outcomes: English Language Arts

Outcomes:	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
<b>General Outcome 1</b> Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences <b>1.1 Discover and Explore</b> <b>Express ideas and develop Understanding</b>	· express personal understandings of ideas and information based on prior knowledge, experiences with others and a variety of oral, print and other media texts	· review, reread and reflect on oral, print and other media texts to explore, confirm or revise understanding	· talk with others and experience a variety of oral, print and other media texts to explore, develop and justify own opinions and points of view
<b>1.2 Clarify and Extend</b> <b>Combine ideas</b>	· use talk, writing and representing to examine, clarify and assess understanding of ideas, information and experiences	· exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives	examine and re-examine ideas, information and experiences from different points of view to find patterns and see relationships
<b>General Outcome 2</b>	· justify own point of view	· expect that there is more	· consider peers'

<p>Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.</p> <p><b>2.2 Respond to Texts</b> Experience various texts</p>	<p>about oral, print and other media texts, using evidence from texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· express interpretations of oral, print and other media texts in another form or genre</li> </ul>	<p>than one interpretation for oral, print and other media texts, and discuss other points of view</p>	<p>interpretations of oral, print and other media texts, referring to the texts for supporting or contradicting evidence</p>
			<p><b>Construct meaning from texts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· identify and discuss theme and point of view in oral, print and other media texts</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.4 Create Original Text</b> Structure texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· create oral, print and other media texts that are unified by point of view</li> <li>· create a variety of oral, print and other media texts to explore ideas related to particular topics or themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· choose forms or genres of oral, print or other media texts for the particular effects they will have on audiences and purposes</li> </ul>	
<p><b>General Outcome 3</b> Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to manage ideas and information.</p> <p><b>3.1 Plan and Focus</b> Focus attention</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· identify and trace the development of arguments, opinions or points of view in oral, print and other media texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· assess adequacy, accuracy, detail and appropriateness of oral, print and other media texts to support or further develop arguments, opinions or points of view</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2 Select and Process</b> Access information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· distinguish between fact and opinion, and follow the development of argument and opinion</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3.3 Organize, Record and Evaluate</b></p>	<p><b>Record information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· reflect on ideas and information to form own opinions with evidence to support them</li> </ul> <p><b>Evaluate information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· connect new information with prior knowledge to build new understanding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organize information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· organize ideas and information to establish an overall impression or point of view in oral, print and other media texts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Record information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· select and record ideas and information that will support an opinion or point of view, appeal to the audience, and suit the tone and length of the chosen form of oral, print or other media text</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.4 Share and Review</b> Share ideas and information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as reports, autobiographies, brochures and video presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts</li> <li>· integrate appropriate visual, print and/or other media to reinforce overall impression or point of view and engage the audience</li> </ul>

#### IV. Materials:

- a copy of the article, "**What Exercise Can Do For You**" for each student in the class (following this lesson).

#### V. Procedure:

##### **Introduction:**

1. Explain to students that you are going to conduct an informal survey. Take an inventory of how many students enjoy the following activities: swimming, cycling, skateboarding, snowboarding, skiing, hiking, etc.. Tally the results and record them on the board.

2. Pretend to shift direction in your questioning by stating in a serious fashion that you have one more question. Then take a breath, pause, and ask pointedly, "How many of you like to exercise?" Allow for the possibility of groans and complaints.

3. Write the term *exercise* on the chalkboard beside the list of activities that you have previously recorded. Circle the list, and draw an arrow pointing to this term. Point out that fact that all of these enjoyable sports and recreational activities are forms of physical activity that provide the same fitness benefits of exercise. Note that in addition to being fun, these activities provide numerous other health benefits. Add that students are about to read an article on this subject that may contain some surprises.

4. Ask how many students have seen the following message or some variation of it on television: "The views expressed in this program are not necessarily those of this station. Ask: "What kind of programs usually carry warnings of this kind?" (Shows with a controversial theme or content). Observe that this message reveals a difference in **point of view**, people's reaction to a particular topic. Refer back to the list you created on the chalkboard during the introduction to the lesson. Explain that the differing numbers represent different points of view with respect to the sports and activities named. Note that when approaching any media message, whether it is a TV show, a written article, or some other medium, it is important to be aware of:

- The point of view of the creator/writer/producer.
- The point of view of any and all participants and interviewees.

Explain that it is only when a message is approached in this fashion can the consumer be sure of reaching his or her own conclusions.

5. Hand out printed copies of the article, "*What Exercise Can Do For You*". After students have finished reading the article, the following questions can be used to either guide a class discussion or assigned as individual or group work.

##### **Discussion Questions:**

###### ➤ **Awareness.**

1. In which section of the article does the author first present her point of view on the topic? Which statement or statements best captures her views on exercise? In what ways does her point of view mirror that of the teens quoted at the beginning of the article? In what way does it differ? Explain.

###### ➤ **Analysis.**

2. Identify at least three physical benefits of participating in sports and recreational activities. In what ways do these activities provide mental benefits? Social benefits? Support your answers with specific examples from the article.

###### ➤ **Evaluation.**

3. Reread the first sentence of the section of the article titled "Reducing Risk." Whose point of view is the author expressing? Do you think the opinion expressed is shared by fitness experts? Why or why not?

➤ **Communication.**

4. Review the author's advice in the final section of the article entitled: "Fitting Exercise In". What specific activities does she mention in support of the view she puts forth? What other activities can you think of that you would enjoy doing to make physical activity a regular part of your lifestyle? How can you share your choices with classmates?

**6. Evaluating the Point of View in Another Medium**

The airways (TV, radio, the Internet) and print media (magazines, newspapers) are filled with messages on exercise and fitness. Some of them have points of view similar to those expressed in this article. Yet, in most of them, there are differences. Select one of these media, and focus on a particular message that has to do with exercise and getting in shape. Possibilities are a TV commercial for a health club or a magazine ad for a dietary supplement that claims to help people shape up. Analyze the point of view, then state the message being sent. Share your findings with those of classmates.

**VI. Extensions and Variations:**

- Oral Representation: Create a radio broadcast or commercial to promote your personal perspective on the benefits of regular physical activity. Be sure that your message is clear and supported by your individual point of view and specific examples are provided as evidence.
- Visual Representation: Create a promotional poster, brochure, or billboard advocating the benefits of regular exercise.

## Student Resource Sheet

### What Exercise Can Do for You

Sheila Globus

*As you read the introduction to this article, apply the strategies that you just learned. Look for details that support the main idea “What’s so great about exercise?”*

What’s so great about exercise? “It gives me energy,” says Brinley, a member of the Junior Olympic Diving Team. “Instead of always being tired, I’m more awake and can focus on my school work better.”

Albee, a 15-year-old football player who lifts weights in the off-season, admits that pre-game workouts and scrimmages tire him out. But, he says, “I feel a lot stronger and I’m a better player, especially since I started weightlifting.”

Beth, a ninth grader, plays field hockey and lacrosse. She says that exercise helps her look and feel better and gives her a chance to be on a team with her friends. “It gives us a chance to work toward a common goal,” she says.

#### Shaping Up

We all know we should exercise: It’s good for the heart, can help keep your weight under control, and might even help you live longer. Studies show, however, that as teenagers get older, they exercise less. Few can run a mile in under 10 minutes. Fewer still get the recommended 30 minutes of **moderate** exercise three or more times a week. In fact, as the use of computers and technology continues to grow, many teenagers are exercising little more than their fingers, tapping away at the keyboard.

It takes effort to make exercise a habit, but those who invest the time and energy are seldom disappointed. “Our coach makes us do a half-hour workout before we get into the pool,” says Brinley, a high school sophomore. “We do sit-ups, run stairs, do crunches, and stretch. That’s what helped me get stronger, build more **endurance**, and stay loose and limber. I think it’s also made me a better diver.”

Brinley has the right idea. Just participating in a sport doesn’t automatically get you into shape. To really get fit, you have to develop each component of fitness – **cardiovascular** endurance, muscle **strength**, and flexibility. For that, a combination of aerobics, stretching, and strengthening exercises works best.

#### Reducing Risk

Fitness experts say that nearly half of all young people ages 12 to 21 aren’t active enough. That can lead to problems later in life, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis (thin, brittle bones that break easily), and even early death. What’s more, a couch-potato lifestyle is harder to change the older you get.

Besides reducing your risk of these diseases, regular exercise can help you in smaller ways, too, such as helping you bounce back quicker from a cold and boosting **metabolism** so that you burn more calories. A healthy heart, stronger bones, and a trim and toned body, however, are just the physical benefits of exercise. Even more important is what it does for your mood and your mind.

“Exercise makes me feel better about myself and about the way I look,” says Brinley. “I can even see my muscles. I always feel better after diving practice. I’m more confident, too – not just about diving, but about everything.”

Finding an exercise that’s fun is the key to getting something out of it. If lessons or team sports aren’t your thing, try other activities that you think you might enjoy more. “Five years of Karate made me a lot more **flexible**,” says Rachel, “but it was boring. What I really like is step aerobics. I always leave the class feeling energized and stronger.”

### **Fitting Exercise In**

Even if you’re not into sports, you can still find ways to sneak in a little extra physical activity wherever you can. Walk the dog, take the stairs instead of escalators, ride your bike to school. You won’t be sorry. Here are some other ideas:

- ✓ Plan some fun into your schedule – a couple sets of tennis, a game of volleyball, a leisurely jog or hike along a trail.
- ✓ Shovel snow for a great heart-strengthening activity. (Builds your biceps, too, if you lift and toss it.)
- ✓ Vacuum, sweep, and scrub around the house (preferably with the stereo playing in the background).
- ✓ Help out in the yard raking leaves, or weeding and planting, depending on the season.

Exercise that’s fun is exercise you’ll stick with. In addition to possibly concentrating on developing a single skill, like sinking baskets or executing a perfect dive, think about all the things exercise can do for you – and go for it. You’ll condition your lungs, build strong muscles, make your tendons and ligaments supple, and maintain a healthy weight. What’s more, you’ll feel great. Take it from Brinley: “Even if I never make it to the Olympics, I won’t ever stop doing exercise,” she says. “It feels too good.”