

All Aboard the Physical Activity Train



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify at least three benefits of physical activity by playing interactive games.
- Recall the physical activity recommendations.
- Name at least three inexpensive ways to be physically active.
- Apply the idea of pairing physical activity with family time.
- Recall three rules of exercise safety.
- Monitor their exertion during physical activity.

MATERIALS

- Adequate, clutter-free space
- Water (provide access to a water fountain or other water sources)
- One ball per four players — they can be basketballs, soccer balls, or any kind of medium-sized ball made of rubber or plastic
- A stopwatch
- A whistle
- A dry-erase board or large sheets of paper
- Markers
- The *Recommended Minutes of Physical Activity for Adults* handout (p. H – 6)
- The *Physical Activity Scoreboard* handout (p. H – 8)
- The *Physical Activity Pyramid* handout (p. H – 26)
- The *Let's Get Active* handout (p. H – 28)
- The *Physical Activity and Exercise Safety* handout (p. H – 29)
- The *Stretching Exercises* handout (p. H – 30)
- Pencils or pens





PREPARATION

1. Locate a room or open space that will safely accommodate all participants.
2. Become familiar with the content of each handout prior to implementing the lesson. Photocopy the *Recommended Minutes of Physical Activity for Adults*, *Physical Activity Scoreboard*, *Physical Activity Pyramid*, *Let's Get Active*, *Physical Activity and Exercise Safety*, and *Stretching Exercises* handouts for each participant. If you are teaching this lesson in a series, you may want to reproduce only the handouts that are new to the group.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

1. Distribute the *Recommended Minutes of Physical Activity for Adults* handout to each participant, and review the information. Explain to participants that to maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every day. Explain that for most people, greater health benefits can be achieved by doing more physical activity. For example, to help manage body weight and prevent gradual weight gain, adults need 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity on most days of the week. To sustain weight loss, adults need 60 to 90 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every day. Note that some people may need to consult with a health care provider before participating in this level of activity.
2. Distribute the *Let's Get Active* handout and pens or pencils to participants. Ask participants to complete the handout.
3. Ask participants to share their answers, and record their responses on the board or sheet of paper for the class to see.
4. Review the list of responses with the class, and use the discussion to introduce the *All Aboard the Physical Activity Train* lesson. Explain that the train games are a fun and easy way to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.
5. Distribute the *Physical Activity and Exercise Safety* handout, and review it with participants. Engage participants in a warm-up by walking in place at a relaxed pace for 3 to 5 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide participants into teams of four to six players.
2. Instruct each team to stand in a single file line to form a train. The person in front of each line becomes the conductor and receives a ball.
3. Demonstrate the following passing sequences to the participants:

Track 1: Pass the ball overhead to the next person in line. The last player walks the ball up to become the conductor.

Track 2: Twist to the right side and pass the ball to the next person in line. The last player walks the ball up to become the conductor.

Track 3: Twist to the left side and pass the ball to the next person in line. The last player walks the ball up to become the conductor.

Track 4: Bend the knees and pass the ball between the legs to the next person in line. The last player walks the ball up to become the conductor.

4. Have each team practice, in place, each of the four passing sequences. Call out each step to instruct the teams to try a new sequence.
5. After the teams have practiced, call out "All aboard!" Have the teams walk in place for 2 to 3 minutes as a warm-up. Instruct the teams to increase their pace to a comfortable walk-in-place and keep that same pace throughout the game.

6. Call out "Track 1," and demonstrate the first passing skill. The teams continue this passing skill for several cycles.
7. After 2 to 3 minutes, call out "Changing tracks," and demonstrate the second passing skill (for example, twist to the right and pass the ball behind) as the trains continue to move. Continue through all four passing skills, making each series last 2 to 3 minutes.
8. After 10 to 12 minutes of activity, call out "Train station ahead!" Instruct the conductors to hold the balls and slow down the train with a 2 to 3 minute walking-in-place cool down.
9. In between games, have a question and answer session about the benefits of physical activity. Remind participants about the importance of exercise safety, and answer their questions.



10. Conclude the lesson by leading a cool-down and stretch session by having participants walk in place and complete a variety of stretches as described in the *Stretching Exercises* handout. Ask participants how they might use this lesson or a similar lesson at home with their friends and family members. Next, distribute the *Physical Activity Scoreboard* and *Physical Activity Pyramid* handouts to participants. Encourage participants to use the *Physical Activity Scoreboard* at home to monitor their physical activity progress. Encourage participants to use the *Physical Activity Pyramid* handout to learn easy and fun ways to include physical activity in their daily lives.

Expansion Ideas

ALTERNATIVE PASSING

Demonstrate to the class alternating passing sequences. For example, the conductor begins play by twisting to his or her left and passing the ball. The next player passes the ball by twisting to his or her right. The alternating pattern continues until the last player walks the ball up to become the new conductor. Another option is to alternate passing the ball over the head with passing the ball through the legs.

MORE MOVEMENT

Instead of walking in place, instruct the class to walk forward while passing the ball in the various passing sequences.

Tips

- Using the *Stretching Exercise* handout, set up stretching stations throughout the room prior to implementing the Warm-Up Activity. Post the pages using adhesive tape. Have participants rotate to each stretching station.
- Supermarkets and large retailers sell inexpensive, colorful rubber balls in the toy or sporting goods sections.
- If balls are not available, bean bags or Frisbees make adequate substitutes.
- Ask participants what variations they would make to the train game.
- Use the *Shake It Up! Tool Kit Version Music CD* to add music to the train game.
- Invite a representative from YMCA, YWCA, or Parks and Recreation to present the lesson with you.

TARGET HEART RATE

Between games, have participants take their pulse for 15 seconds and multiply the result by four. Have them compare their results to the *Target Heart Rate* handout to measure their exertion levels.

