

Name/Title: The Twelve Days of Fitness

Purpose of Event: I use this activity as a warm-up during the month of December. It's a great way to teach students about different types of exercises and how they relate to the different components of fitness.

Prerequisites: Students should know the tune of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Suggested Grade Level: 1-5

Materials Needed: Bulletin board or wall space, different cut-outs of various Christmas/winter shapes (trees, stars, gloves, snowmen, etc.) with one exercise written on each.

Description of Idea

Begin this activity 12 classes before the winter vacation. Each day the students will come in and begin class by singing the "Twelve Days of Fitness" song and perform the exercises that correspond with the song. The first day students begin with one exercise and as the days increase they are required to do the new exercise as well as all the previous ones (as in the tradition of the Twelve Days of Christmas song). Each day, at the end of class, the teacher introduces the next component of the song so when the students arrive the next day they can begin with the exercise for that day.

A posted chart with drawings of the exercises, added to each day, can be available as a prompt for students to help in remembering the exercises each day.

Exercises can be used as listed or modified to meet the needs of the students. Younger students could do this warm-up activity as well, for example, using the various locomotor skills.

Here's how I sing the song and the exercises I have students do:

"On the __ Day of Fitness my teacher said to do..."

1 Set of Crab A-B-Cs (Students begin in "crab position" and tap their shoulder with the opposite hand saying the alphabet with each tap.)

2 Line Sprints

3 Laps of Jogging

4 Push-ups

5 Bicep Curls

6 Squat Thrusts

7 Mountain Climbers

8 Sit-ups

9 Jump and Taps (students stand next to a wall with arm closest to the wall extended - then they jump up and tap the wall)

- 10 Calf Raises
- 11 Jumping Jacks
- 12 Seconds of Stretching

Variations:

This activity can be used with younger students if the exercises are simple. For example, use the locomotor and body management skills that have previously been taught.

- 12 jumps on both feet,
- 11 side steps,
- 10 swinging sways,
- 9 gallop steps,
- 8 runs in place,
- 7 skipping steps,
- 6 hops on one foot,
- 5 twists and turns,
- 4 giant leaps,
- 3 high reaches,
- 2 forward rolls, and
- a big lap around the gym.

Assessment Ideas:

It's easy to assess whether students are learning the new exercises with proper form because there is so much repetition of exercises throughout this activity. When students line up to leave at the end of class, ask which components of fitness are demonstrated with the new exercise for that day. Ask which muscles were used and why it is important to strengthen those muscles.

Teaching Suggestions:

One can create a bulletin board outside of the gym to go with this activity. The bulletin board is designed to look like a calendar and each day put up a new paper cut-out out of a winter shape with the new exercise on it.

Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:

Modify the exercises for students with disabilities and give the student a chart of the adaptations. For example, a student in a wheelchair can do abdominal tightening during the sit-ups, or stretch arms upward during the vertical jumps.

Submitted by **Mara DeSilva** who teaches at Rensselaer Park Elementary in Troy, NY. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 4/8/2007.**

Visit [S&S Discount](#) for all your physical education equipment and supplies!