



Feeling Comfortable in Physical Activity

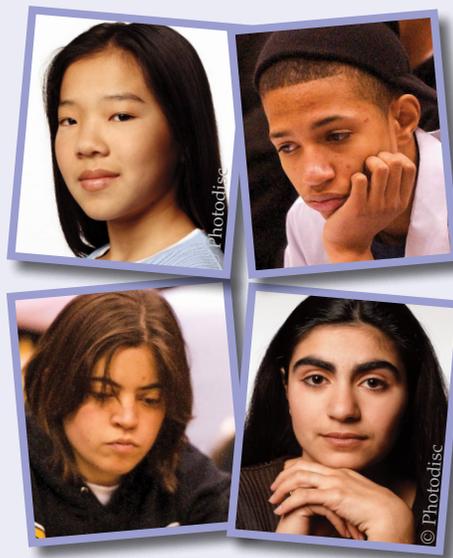
There are many reasons why teens sometimes avoid participating in physical activity with others. They might be afraid of making a mistake and looking bad. They might want to avoid being teased by others who'd put down the activity by saying, "That's just for girls" or "That's just for boys." They might have missed the beginning of the activity and think it's too late to join in. Do you sometimes feel uncomfortable in certain activities? Do your friends sometimes seem uncomfortable in activities that you enjoy? What can be done to make activities more comfortable for different people?

Progressive resistance exercises can help you look good and have confidence in physical activity. They are good for both boys and girls and can benefit people of all ages when performed according to the guidelines in this chapter.

Tenzin, Sam, José, and Jasmine have learned a lot since they started the Fitness for Life program. They've learned about the many different types of physical activity including progressive resistance exercise for building muscle fitness. They frequently work out together after school. But recently they became involved in a situation that made them uncomfortable.

One day last week they planned to work out in the fitness center after school. The four met at Tenzin's locker so that they could walk to the fitness center together. However, José said that he was going to go home because he didn't have what he called "fancy clothes" like some of the other teens who would be at the fitness center. José's friends encouraged him to go with them. He decided not to join them and went home.

The plan was for each person to do his own muscle fitness workout. Then they were going to play some volleyball in the gym next to the fitness center. The workout went fine except that they missed José. Jasmine felt a bit self-conscious doing resistance exercises but she finished her workout. But before they got started with their volleyball game, several problems occurred. Two boys started choosing teams, and many of the girls said they didn't



want to play—they just wanted to watch. Some of the boys who were waiting to be picked said that they didn't want to play either. Tenzin and Jasmine really wanted to play, but they decided to watch because so many other girls were watching.

Discussion Questions

- 1 What should Sam, Tenzin, and Jasmine say to José to encourage him to go with them? How might they help José feel OK when he arrives at the fitness center?
- 2 What could the friends do to make Jasmine feel more comfortable in the fitness center?
- 3 What could the friends say to encourage all of the teens to participate in the game? How might Tenzin and Jasmine get involved? How might they help other girls get involved?
- 4 Are there actions other than talking that could be taken to help everyone get involved in the activity? What might these be?

Guidelines for Feeling Comfortable in Physical Activity

- Consider the way you dress. If some members of the group are unable to dress in

special clothing, especially if that clothing is expensive, you might want to dress down a bit. This can help others feel more comfortable in the group.

- *Talk about the activities you all enjoy.* Before you plan an activity, talk with all members of your group to learn which activities they enjoy.
- *Vary your activities.* If possible, choose an activity that everyone enjoys. That's not always possible, but you can agree to do different activities so that you'll eventually do an activity for everyone in the group.
- *Modify games.* Change the rules and equipment to make the game more fun for your group. For example, try using a larger, softer ball in place of an official volleyball. Or play two games with smaller teams rather than one big game. Forming new teams from time to time allows people to be team members with many different people.
- *Consider cooperative rather than competitive games.* Competitive activities can be fun if all people have similar skills. But if some members of the group don't have good skills, noncompetitive activities can be more fun. For example, play a game of volleyball in which the goal is to see how many hits in a row the two teams can make together.
- *Avoid choosing sides in a way that causes some people to feel bad.* Having two people

choose teams can cause hurt feelings, especially among those who get picked last. Check with your teacher about ways to choose sides so that teams are even without hurting anyone's feelings.

- *Practice some of the skills before playing the game.* If some group members have good skills, they can teach other group members and help them practice the skills. If all group members develop their skills, the activity will be more fun for everyone.
- *Choose an activity location where not many people are watching.* Some people are self-conscious when others watch them play. The activity might be more fun for everyone if you find a play area where other people aren't watching and commenting on your performance.
- *Do something after each activity to make group members want to try again.* Sitting down and talking in a social way can make people feel a part of the group. Even if some group members aren't especially good at the current activity, they might stay in the group if being in the group is fun. Think of other things you can do to include all people in the group.
- *Encourage others, but don't overdo it.* Give words of encouragement to everyone in your group, but especially to those who don't have as much skill. But don't overdo it. If you give certain people too much encouragement, they might think that you feel sorry for them because of their skills.

Games can be modified to make them accessible to all.





Take It Home

Building Muscle and Character

Strength can be displayed in many ways. Physical strength is needed for rock climbing and cheerleading. In this chapter you learned how to build muscles to improve physical strength. Mental strength is tested during a chess match. You learn how to improve mental strength in many of the classes you take in school.

Strength of character is another kind of strength. It's tested daily, and it defines you as a person. Are you honest? Do you play fair? Do you take responsibility for your own actions?

Do you stand up for others even when it's the unpopular thing to do? Do you respect others regardless of their age, sex, and ethnic background? Are you a caring person? Are you a good citizen in your class, neighborhood, community, and country? Your answers to these and other questions indicate your strength of character. Use the Take It Home activity sheet to show how you can demonstrate strength of character in physical education.

Lesson Review

- 1 What is muscle fitness, and what are its three parts?
- 2 What are the principles of muscle fitness development, and what is the FIT formula for each part of muscle fitness?
- 3 What are some of the different types of progressive resistance exercise, and what are some guidelines for performing them safely?
- 4 What are similes, and what are some examples of fitness similes?
- 5 What are some of the guidelines for feeling comfortable in physical activity?

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