

## Effect of physical activity on selected physical fitness variables among school girls

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### ■ ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of physical activity on selected physical fitness variables among school girls. To achieve this purpose of the study, thirty girls were randomly selected from Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Patran, Patiala, Punjab, India, as subjects and their age ranged from 14 to 17 years. They were divided into two equal groups of fifteen each, Group I underwent physical activity programme and Group II acted as control and they did not participate in any special training apart from their regular curricular activities. The subjects were tested on selected criterion variables such as speed, muscular endurance and cardio-vascular endurance prior to and immediately after the training period. The selected criterion variables such as speed were measured by using 50 yards dash, muscular endurance was measured by using bent knee sit-ups and cardio-vascular endurance was measured by 8 min run and walk test, respectively. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to find out the significant differences if any, between the experimental group and control group on selected criterion variables separately. In all the cases, 0.05 level of confidence was fixed to test the significance, which was considered as an appropriate. The result of the present study has revealed that there was a significant difference among the experimental and control group on speed, muscular endurance and cardio-vascular endurance.

■ **Key Words** : Physical activity, Physical fitness, Variables

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Physical exercise is any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness. It is performed for various reasons including strengthening muscles and the cardio-vascular system, athletic skills, weight loss or maintenance, as well as for the purpose of enjoyment.

Frequent and regular physical exercise boosts the immune system, and helps prevent the “diseases of affluence” such as heart disease, cardio-vascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity. It also improves mental health, helps to prevent depression, helps to promote or maintain positive self-esteem, and can even augment an individual’s sex appeal or body image, which is also found to be linked with higher levels of self-esteem. Childhood obesity is a growing global concern and physical exercise may help to decrease some of

the effects of childhood and adult obesity. Health care providers often call exercise the “miracle” or “wonder” drug—alluding to the wide variety of proven benefits that it provides (Dudgeon *et al.*, 2004). Increase in the volume and intensity of leisure-time physical activity is associated with increase in physical fitness in adults. Exercise recommendations to improve and maintain cardio-respiratory fitness suggest exercise that uses large muscle groups, is performed three to five times a week, at intensity of 60–90 per cent of maximum heart rate and for 20–60 minutes at a time. These latest fitness recommendations also include guidelines for enhancing muscular fitness and flexibility. Positive effects on lifestyle behaviours and physical health status measures, ongoing physical activity promotion in schools is recommended at this time (Dobbins *et al.*, 2009). Specific exercises or activities