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The Jury Is In!

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In the 60's, my colleagues and I worked to promote exercise simply because we were convinced that it had significant health benefits, physically, emotionally and mentally. "Someday," we would say, "they will prove what we know." We never believed it would happen in our lifetime.

Astonishingly, it's happened. The jury *is* in. Enough strong evidence exists that the Surgeon General's report on physical activity was released in July. It states, "Because physical activity is so directly related to preventing disease and premature death and to maintaining a high quality of life, we must accord it the same level of attention that we give other important public health practices that affect the entire nation."

Some of the findings? Regular physical activity:

- * lowers mortality rates
- * decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease
- * prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure

- * decreases the risk of colon cancer
- * lowers the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.
- * preserves the ability to maintain independent living status
- * may relieve symptoms of depression
- * prevents 250,000 U.S. deaths (12% of all deaths)

The world has changed. No longer will the naysayers be able to claim that exercise is foolish or worthless. Physical activity is as powerful as stopping smoking, reducing blood pressure and lowering cholesterol.

This report can be the impetus we've needed to see sweeping lifestyle changes. Consider this: Before the Surgeon General's report on smoking, our smoking population was more than 50%. It is now less than 30%. Currently, 60% of the population is sedentary. Can you feel the potential? These are exciting times. It couldn't be a more promising way to start the school year.



Welcome back!

SOMETHING TO PONDER



Lifetime Instruction?

Percentage of teachers who devote multiple class periods to each activity.

Activity

Basketball		86.8
Volleyball		82.3
Baseball/softball		81.5
Flag/touch football		68.5
Soccer		65.2
*Jogging		46.5
*Weight lifting or training		37.3
*Tennis		30.3

Activity

*Aerobic dance		29.6
*Walking quickly		14.7
*Swimming		13.6
*Handball		13.2
*Racquetball		4.9
*Hiking/backpacking		3.0
*Bicycling		1.3

* Lifetime physical activities

Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1996