



Get Fit and Be Active!

A Handbook for Youths Ages 6–17



How to Be More Active and Get
in Shape to Meet the President's
Challenge

You're it.
Get fit!

The President's Challenge Physical
Activity & Fitness Awards Program

A Program of the President's Council on Physical Fitness
and Sports, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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*Get Fit and Be Active! A Handbook For Youths Ages 6–17:
How to Be More Active and Get in Shape to Meet the President's Challenge*

The President's Challenge is a program of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This booklet can be downloaded from the President's Challenge Web site at www.presidentschallenge.org/pdf/getfit.pdf. For ordering multiple copies of this booklet please contact the President's Challenge office at 800-258-8146 or visit the Web site at www.presidentschallenge.org.

A Message from the President's Council

BE ACTIVE YOUR WAY: 2008 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans on October 7, 2008. The comprehensive, science-based guidelines were developed to inform policymakers and health providers about the amounts, types, and intensity of physical activity needed to help Americans aged 6 and older, and of all abilities, improve their health and reduce their risk of chronic diseases.

Regular physical activity in children and adolescents promotes health and fitness. Compared to those who are inactive, physically active youth have higher levels of cardiorespiratory fitness and stronger muscles. They also typically have lower body fatness. Their bones are stronger, and they may have reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Youth who are regularly active also have a better chance of a healthy adulthood. Children and adolescents don't usually develop chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, or osteoporosis. However, risk factors for these diseases can begin to develop early in life. Regular physical activity makes it less likely that these risk factors will develop and more likely that children will remain healthy as adults.

Key Guidelines for Children and Adolescents

- Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.
 - **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.
 - **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.
 - **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.
- It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.

For more information about the Physical Activity Guidelines and associated toolkit, visit <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>.

www.presidentschallenge.org

Introduction

In 1956, President Eisenhower identified the importance of physical activity for a person's health. In 1966, President Johnson began the Presidential Physical Fitness Award Program. This program became the President's Challenge in 1986. Since then American youths between the ages of 6 and 17 have been participating in an awards program that rewards all kids for being active, fit, and healthy, including those with special needs.

Currently, the President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards program has four separate programs to

encourage America's youths to be active, healthy, and fit. One of the primary goals of the President's Challenge is to encourage and promote healthy and active lifestyles among young people.

On the following pages you can learn how to get in shape, learn the importance of being active every day, and learn how to get ready to participate in one or more of the President's Challenge programs. Being active and improving fitness levels will allow you to receive one or more of the President's Challenge awards.

Four program areas

- I. **Presidential Active Lifestyle Award** (page 6)
 - Established in 2001
 - Adults active 30 minutes a day/five days a week for six weeks
 - Youths under 18 active at least 60 minutes a day/five days a week for six weeks
- II. **Presidential Champions Program** (page 8)
 - Established in 2003
 - Gold – 80,000 points
 - Silver – 45,000 points
 - Bronze – 20,000 points
- III. **Presidential Physical Fitness Award** (page 12)
 - Presidential – established in 1966
 - National – established in 1987
 - Participant – established in 1991
- IV. **Health Fitness Award** (page 30)
 - Established in 1996
 - Rewards children who achieve healthy levels of physical fitness based on health-criterion standards

Motivational Tips

With determination, work, and commitment you will improve your physical abilities. Everyone can improve his or her fitness, even those who are already active. Being fit and healthy means performing exercises that will improve endurance, flexibility, and strength.

Setting goals is an important step in starting a fitness program. Keep in mind that the goals you set should be reasonable and realistic. Using the **SMART** system will help you set reachable goals.

Tips to help you stick to your fitness program:

- Keep a log of your activity; you can even use the online log at www.presidentschallenge.org.
- Set aside time to exercise.
- Find a friend to exercise with you.



Example of Setting a SMART Goal

S pecific	Be able to run three miles
M easurable	Log activity each week
A ction Oriented	Run/Walk for 30 minutes three times a week
R ealistic	Run a ten minute mile by the end of the month
T imely	I want to be able to do this by the end of the month

F.I.T.T. Principles

To improve your fitness level and your chances of meeting the standards of the President's Challenge, you should follow these principles of exercise:

Frequency, Intensity, Type, and Time (F.I.T.T.).

Frequency

Set up a regular schedule for exercising. Try to accumulate at least one hour of activity daily with more vigorous workouts three to four days a week. You are likely to see improvements when you exercise regularly and have a schedule for exercise. Also, you are more likely to continue those workouts when you have an exercise schedule.

Intensity

For your muscles to get stronger or your body to get fit, you must work harder when exercising than when you are at rest. Your heart should beat faster and your breathing should increase when you are performing aerobic exercise and when you are lifting weights. Make sure you work harder when you are exercising, but don't overdo it. Lifting too much weight or working out too hard can cause injuries.

Type

You need to exercise your body the same way that you are going to use it. For example, aerobic exercise will not build flexibility, and lifting weights will not increase your aerobic endurance. For flexibility, you must stretch. For aerobic capacity, you must increase your heart rate. For strength, you must work your muscles.

Time

Gradually increase the number of times you do an exercise, the length of time that perform an exercise, and how hard you exercise. It generally takes six to eight weeks to see physical improvements, but you will feel better shortly after starting to exercise.



Phases of Exercise

1. Warm Up: Before you exercise, you should always warm up your body. When you warm up your body you increase your blood flow and get your muscles and joints ready to exercise. Most people are warmed up when they begin to sweat and breathe heavier. Warming up makes your muscles more limber and decreases your chance of being injured during exercise.

2. Stretching: Once you have warmed up, you can complete stretching exercises that will prepare your whole body. You should specifically target the muscles that will be used while you are actively exercising.

3. Exercise: Complete the exercise activities in which you choose to participate. Always make sure to take appropriate safety precautions (e.g., wear protective gear) and to exercise for a duration and at an intensity that is appropriate for your fitness level.



4. Cooling Down: Once you have completed exercising you are ready to cool down. It is just as important to cool down after exercise as it is to warm up before exercise. When you cool down you should let your breathing return to normal. It is best to walk around for a few minutes to make sure your breathing is normal and to let your heartbeat slow down. After you have walked around for a few minutes following vigorous exercise, you are ready to begin your cool down stretches.

Stretching again after you have cooled down will help prevent injuries, help to increase your range of motion, and will prevent soreness. You should complete the stretches you did before the exercise and add more stretches for the specific muscles worked.

The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award

The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) is a program that shows how to make and keep a commitment to staying active. It helps you set realistic goals to encourage regular physical activity for a lifetime. This program is especially for those who are not already active on a regular basis.

1. Choose an activity.

You can take the Challenge by yourself, or together with friends and family. Choose activities that you enjoy and make you feel good. For example, it could be walking, taking an exercise class, playing a sport, or doing chores around the house.

2. Get active.

You need to meet your daily activity goal (30 minutes a day for adults/60 minutes a day for youths under 18) at least 5 days per week, for a total of 6 weeks. You can take up to 8 weeks to complete the program.



3. Track your activity.

Our online activity log makes it easy for you to track the time you spend on activities. You can log your time as often as you want, in increments as short as 5 minutes.

Visit www.presidentschallenge.org to see the activity log.

You can also keep track of your progress on paper with the enclosed activity log form. Keep in mind that this means we won't have an online record of the activity points you earn, which could apply to other programs in the President's Challenge.

4. Earn your award.

Whenever you reach a goal, the Active Lifestyle program recognizes your accomplishment with special awards. Awards are available online, by mail, fax, or phone. You can then continue earning awards in the Active Lifestyle program or move on to the next challenge: the Presidential Champions program. Everybody in the Active Lifestyle program can choose the activities they like doing. Whether it's at home, at school, on a sports team, alone, or with friends and family, you can choose activities that are fun and make you feel good.

The PALA is awarded to children who are active for 60 minutes, at least five days a week, for six weeks. An additional way to earn the PALA is by using a pedometer that measures the number of steps you take in a day. Girls who complete a minimum of 11,000 steps per day and boys who complete a minimum of 13,000 steps per day can win the PALA award. Upon winning this award, we hope you will have begun to lead an active lifestyle that will continue throughout your life.



What is a pedometer?

A pedometer is a small device worn on your hip; it counts the number of steps that you take.



Active Lifestyle Log Example:

Week 1	Activities	# Minutes or Pedometer Steps
Monday	Rode Bicycle, Skate Board, PE Class	70
Tuesday	Pedometer	12,050
Wednesday	Dance Lessons, Walk the Dog, Recess	75
Thursday	Pedometer	11,177
Friday	Roller Blading, Street Hockey, PE Class	65
Saturday	Scooter Riding, Soccer	75
Sunday	Went to Park w/family, Karate Lessons	60

Participant Signature	Date
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Other activities that count might include any teams that you play on, activities in physical education class or at recess, active games with your friends, or any other activity that takes effort.

This activity log can be downloaded from the President's Challenge Web site at www.presidentschallenge.org.

The Presidential Champions Program

The Presidential Champions Program is for adults who are active more than 30 minutes a day, 5 days per week (or more than 60 minutes a day for youths under 18). There's even a special track for athletes and others who train at more advanced levels. You can join the Presidential Champions Program online at www.presidentschallenge.org. Taking part in the program takes just a few simple steps:

1. Choose an activity.

Select activities that you enjoy and make you feel good. For example, you could go running, walk the dog, or participate in martial arts. You can take the Challenge by yourself, or together with friends and family.

2. Get active.

Your goal is to see how many points you can earn by being active. You'll earn points for every activity you log. Points are based on the amount of energy each activity burns. So the more active you are, the more points you'll get.

3. Track your activity.

Our online activity log makes it easy for you to track the time you spend on activities. You can log your time as often as you want, in amounts as short as 5 minutes. Although you can't log time for activities you haven't done yet, you can go back up to 14 days to enter past activities.

4. Earn your award.

The Presidential Champions program recognizes your accomplishments with special awards. The first goal to aim for is a Bronze award. Then you can keep going for a Silver and Gold. Awards are available online, or by mail, phone, or fax.

You'll find all the program details – including how many points are needed for each award level – online at www.presidentschallenge.org. The only thing left to do is to log on and sign up.



CHAMPIONS



Presidential Champions Gold Award

For anyone who earns 80,000 points in the Presidential Champions Program.

Presidential Champions Silver Award

For anyone who earns 45,000 points in the Presidential Champions Program.

Presidential Champions Bronze Award

For anyone who earns 20,000 points in the Presidential Champions Program.



Why Do We Measure Physical Fitness?

Physical fitness has many parts. When you are physically fit you have the energy and strength to perform daily activities without getting tired. Also, you have the energy to participate in leisure and recreation activities. When you are fit you have a strong heart, lungs, and muscles. Fitness benefits your daily activities, making it easier to meet daily demands. It also improves your mental health and your ability to cope with stressful events.

Physical Activity

Physical Activity is a general term that encompasses most movements that are produced by skeletal muscles and result in an increase in energy expenditure. Being physically active leads to many lifestyle improvements, including physical and mental health benefits. Activities that would generally result in a change in energy expenditure include tumbling, walking to school, and playing games that require movement.

You should try to be as active as possible at an early age. Building active habits now will help you keep these habits into adulthood.

The time for fitness is now! Children who are physically active and eat correctly grow into healthier and more active adults.

Measuring Physical Fitness

The five components of physical fitness are: **Aerobic Capacity, Muscular Strength, Muscular Endurance, Flexibility, and Body Composition.** Each of these components of physical fitness is measurable.

Aerobic Capacity is the ability of your heart and lungs to supply the muscles of your body with oxygen: an indicator of aerobic fitness. Exercises like cycling, running, swimming, and walking build this type of endurance. How quickly you can run a mile (or shorter distances for younger children) is a test of cardiorespiratory endurance.

Muscular Strength is the amount of force you exert with a muscle. Your body has many muscles and all of them should be exercised to keep them strong. You can use your body weight, or additional weights, such as barbells. Weight-training machines are popular, too.

Performing strength-training exercises can help you become strong and less likely to get injured when working or playing. Strength is good for your posture and creates strong bones.

Muscular Endurance is the ability of your muscles to move for long periods of time, which is an indicator of a muscle's ability to do work. Exercises like curl-ups and push-ups are good for building muscular endurance.

You need to build endurance so you have more energy and are able to play or work harder for longer periods of time. Good health conditions will help prevent the development of some diseases.

Flexibility is the ability to move your muscles and joints through their full range of motion. It is beneficial in injury prevention and relaxation. Stretching increases flexibility. When stretching you should reach easily in a direction and hold the stretch, do not bounce.

Body Composition is the amount of lean body mass, including bones, muscles, and tissues. Those items are compared to the amount of fat in your body. People who are physically fit generally will have much more lean body mass than fat body mass.

Being active and exercising will give your body and muscles shape. People who exercise generally have less body fat than people who are inactive and aren't in shape. Adolescent boys and men tend to have less body fat than adolescent girls and women. If you want to know if your body mass composition is good, ask a physical education or health teacher to measure your percent body fat or to calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI). Directions are listed on page 31.

My Life . . . MyPyramid

Based upon the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, the USDA has also launched the MyPyramid Food Guidance System. MyPyramid provides Web-based interactive and print materials for consumers and professionals. Individual Pyramids can be produced based on your age, sex, and activity level. Go to www.mypyramid.gov to tailor your pyramid to suit your life.



Use "Inside MyPyramid" to help you:

- Make smart choices from every food group
- Find your balance between food and physical activity
- Get the most nutrition out of your calories

Visit the MyPyramid and Dietary Guidelines Web sites for a detailed assessment of your food intake and physical activity level:

www.mypyramid.gov

www.mypyramid.gov/kids

www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/index.html

The Presidential Physical Fitness Award

American children have been earning the Presidential Physical Fitness Award since 1966. Those who reach or exceed the 85th percentile – the top 15 percent of your age group on all five items of the test – are eligible to receive the Presidential Award for outstanding achievement.

- Those who complete the President's Challenge physical fitness test items and exceed the 50th percentile on all of the test items, but who do not achieve the 85th percentile on one or more, qualify for the National Award.

- Those who complete the President's Challenge physical fitness test, but do not exceed the 50th percentile on all test items, qualify to receive the Participant Award.

- Earning any of these awards should bring pride to you. We encourage you to try for improvement from year to year. Remember that people who are trying to be fit and active are all winners!

- Each of the five items in the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Award test measures a specific aspect of fitness.

Physical fitness test items

1. Curl-ups OR Partial Curl-ups
abdominal strength/endurance
2. Endurance Run/Walk
heart/lung endurance
3. Pull-ups OR Right Angle Push-ups
upper body strength/endurance
4. Shuttle Run
leg strength/power/agility
5. V-Sit Reach OR Sit and Reach
lower back/hamstring flexibility



Qualifying standards for the Physical Fitness Award are on page 16. For more specific percentiles for test events, you can also download the President's Challenge Normative Data Spreadsheet at www.presidentschallenge.org. Choose the download option.

Physical Fitness Award Test Items

On the following pages, you'll find the exercises that you will be asked to complete when you take the President's Challenge. You can also view these events on our Web site (www.presidentschallenge.org). Additionally, there are some suggested exercises that can help you meet the President's Challenge. When doing these exercises make sure you follow the directions. If you are unsure about what to do or would like more or different exercises to perform, ask your instructor.



1. Curl-ups

Lie on a cushioned, clean surface with your knees flexed and feet about 12 inches from your buttocks. Place your hands on the opposite shoulders with your arms crossed. Have a partner hold your feet and count your curl-ups. Holding your elbows close to your chest raise your trunk up to touch your elbows to your thighs. A complete curl-up is counted for each time you lie back and touch your shoulders to the floor. Do as many curl-ups as you can in one minute.

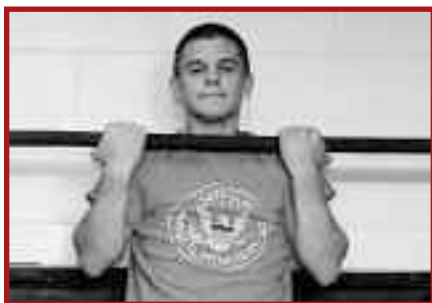
OR Partial Curl-ups

Lie on a cushioned clean surface with your knees flexed and your feet 12 inches from your buttocks. Your arms will be extended forward with your fingers resting on your legs and pointed toward your knees. Have a partner cup his or her hands underneath your head. To do a partial curl-up, you will slide your hands up your legs until your fingers touch your knees. A partial curl-up is complete when you place your head back in your partner's hands. Do one partial curl-up every three seconds until you cannot complete one at this pace. These should be used for regular exercise.



2. Endurance Walk/Run

At the signal "Ready, Go," begin the endurance run on a safe and marked course. You may walk during the test but you should try to complete the distance in the shortest time possible. Children who are 6 or 7 years old may run one-quarter of a mile and children who are 8 or 9 may run one-half of a mile.



3. Pull-ups

You should grasp a bar, with either an overhand or an underhand grip, and hang from the bar with your feet hanging freely (not touching the floor). You should raise your body until your chin clears the bar and lower yourself back to the beginning position. Try to complete as many pull-ups as you can.

OR Right Angle Push-ups

You should lie face down on a mat in the push-up position with your hands under your shoulders, fingers straight; your legs should be straight, parallel, and slightly apart with your toes supporting your feet. Straighten your arms, keeping your back and knees straight while you lower your body until there is a 90-degree angle at your elbows and your upper arms are parallel to the floor, then push back up. Do one push-up every three seconds until you cannot complete one at this pace.



4. Shuttle Run

Start with two lines 30 feet apart. Place two blocks of wood or similar objects behind one line. Go to the opposite line and at the signal “Ready, Go,” run to the other line, pick up one block, run back to the line you started at and place it on the floor behind the line. Run back to the other line, pick up the second block, and run back and cross the starting line. Do this as fast as you can, without throwing the blocks.



5. V-Sit Reach

With your shoes off, place your feet 8 to 12 inches apart on a line marked on the floor. This is the baseline, which will be crossed by a measuring line that will be used to measure your flexibility. Clasp your thumbs so your hands are together with palms facing down, then place them on the measuring line. Have a partner hold your legs straight and keep your toes facing upward. As you reach forward, exhale, and reach as far as you can while staying in good position. Try this three times for practice and the fourth trial will be recorded.

OR Sit and Reach

Using a specially constructed box, sit on the floor with your legs straight and your feet flat against the end of the box. A measuring line is marked on top of the box and is even with your feet. This line is marked 23 centimeters. Place your hands evenly along the measuring line and reach forward as far as you can. Do this three times for practice and your fourth trial will be recorded.

The Presidential Physical Fitness Award Qualifying Standards

In order to qualify for this award, participants must achieve at least the 85th percentile in all 5 events represented below. These standards are based on the 1985 School Population Fitness Survey and validated in 1998, by means of comparison with a large nationwide sample collected in 1994.

	Age	Curl-Ups (# one minute)	Partial* Curl-Ups (#)	Shuttle Run (seconds)	V-Sit Reach (inches)	Sit and Reach (centimeters)	One-Mile Run (min-sec)	Distance (min-sec)	Options** (min-sec)	Pull-Ups (#)	Rt. Angle Push-Ups (#)
		OR	OR		OR	OR		OR	OR		
BOYS	6	33	22	12.1	+3.5	31	10:15	1:55		2	9
	7	36	24	11.5	+3.5	30	9:22	1:48		4	14
	8	40	30	11.1	+3.0	31	8:48		3:30	5	17
	9	41	37	10.9	+3.0	31	8:31		3:30	5	18
	10	45	35	10.3	+4.0	30	7:57			6	22
	11	47	43	10.0	+4.0	31	7:32			6	27
	12	50	64	9.8	+4.0	31	7:11			7	31
	13	53	59	9.5	+3.5	33	6:50			7	39
	14	56	62	9.1	+4.5	36	6:26			10	40
	15	57	75	9.0	+5.0	37	6:20			11	42
16	56	73	8.7	+6.0	38	6:08			11	44	
17	55	66	8.7	+7.0	41	6:06			13	53	
GIRLS	6	32	22	12.4	+5.5	32	11:20	2:00		2	9
	7	34	24	12.1	+5.0	32	10:36	1:55		2	14
	8	38	30	11.8	+4.5	33	10:02		3:58	2	17
	9	39	37	11.1	+5.5	33	9:30		3:53	2	18
	10	40	33	10.8	+6.0	33	9:19			3	20
	11	42	43	10.5	+6.5	34	9:02			3	19
	12	45	50	10.4	+7.0	36	8:23			2	20
	13	46	59	10.2	+7.0	38	8:13			2	21
	14	47	48	10.1	+8.0	40	7:59			2	20
	15	48	38	10.0	+8.0	43	8:08			2	20
16	45	49	10.1	+9.0	42	8:23			1	24	
17	44	58	10.0	+8.0	42	8:15			1	25	

The National Physical Fitness Award Qualifying Standards

In order to qualify for this award, participants must achieve at least the 50th percentile in all 5 events represented below. These standards are based on the 1985 School Population Fitness Survey and validated in 1998, by means of comparison with a large nationwide sample collected in 1994.

	Age	Curl-Ups (# one minute)	Partial* Curl-Ups (#)	Shuttle Run (seconds)	V-Sit Reach (inches)	Sit and Reach (centimeters)	One-Mile Run (min-sec)	Distance (min-sec)	Options** (min-sec)	Pull-Ups (#)	Rt. Angle Push-Ups (#)	Flexed Arm Hang (sec)
		OR	OR		OR	OR		OR	OR		OR	
BOYS	6	22	10	13.3	+1.0	26	12:36	2:21		1	7	6
	7	28	13	12.8	+1.0	25	11:40	2:10		1	8	8
	8	31	17	12.2	+0.5	25	11:05		4:22	1	9	10
	9	32	20	11.9	+1.0	25	10:30		4:14	2	12	10
	10	35	24	11.5	+1.0	25	9:48			2	14	12
	11	37	26	11.1	+1.0	25	9:20			2	15	11
	12	40	32	10.6	+1.0	26	8:40			2	18	12
	13	42	39	10.2	+0.5	26	8:06			3	24	14
	14	45	40	9.9	+1.0	28	7:44			5	24	20
	15	45	45	9.7	+2.0	30	7:30			6	30	30
16	45	37	9.4	+3.0	30	7:10			7	30	28	
17	44	42	9.4	+3.0	34	7:04			8	37	30	
GIRLS	6	23	10	13.8	+2.5	27	13:12	2:26		1	6	5
	7	25	13	13.2	+2.0	27	12:56	2:21		1	8	6
	8	29	17	12.9	+2.0	28	12:30		4:56	1	9	8
	9	30	20	12.5	+2.0	28	11:52		4:50	1	12	8
	10	30	24	12.1	+3.0	28	11:22			1	13	8
	11	32	27	11.5	+3.0	29	11:17			1	11	7
	12	35	30	11.3	+3.5	30	11:05			1	10	7
	13	37	40	11.1	+3.5	31	10:23			1	11	8
	14	37	30	11.2	+4.5	33	10:06			1	10	9
	15	36	26	11.0	+5.0	36	9:58			1	15	7
16	35	26	10.9	+5.5	34	10:31			1	12	7	
17	34	40	11.0	+4.5	35	10:22			1	16	7	

*Norms from Canada Fitness Award Program, Health Canada, Government of Canada with permission. **Note: 1/4 and 1/2 mile norms from Amateur Athletic Union Physical Fitness Program with permission.

The Participant Physical Fitness Award Qualifying Standards

Those who attempt all five events, but have one or more scores fall below the 50th percentile (see chart above) are eligible for the Participant Award.

Getting in Shape to Meet The President's Challenge

On the following pages are some suggested exercises that can help you meet the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Award standards. When doing these exercises, make sure

you follow the directions. If you are unsure about what to do or would like additional or different exercises to perform, ask your physical education teacher or health teacher.



Warming Up and Stretching

Warm Up

Before you exercise, you should always warm up your body. When you warm up your body, you get your muscles and joints ready to exercise. Most people are warmed up when they begin to sweat and breathe more heavily.

Warming up makes your muscles more limber and decreases your chance of being injured during exercise.

Flexibility

When training for flexibility you should have already warmed up; you should never perform flexibility exercises when your muscles are cold. Once you have warmed up and are beginning to stretch, the proper form is to stretch until there is some tension on the muscle; do not bounce or try to reach repeatedly while holding a single stretch. When stretching you should reach and hold the stretch while maintaining the proper position for each specific stretching activity. Following are listed a few examples of flexibility exercises.



Neck Stretch

While sitting or standing with your head in its normal upright position, slowly tilt it to the right until tension is felt on the left side of your neck. Hold that tension for 10 to 30 seconds and then return your head to the upright position. Repeat to the left side, and then toward the front. Always return to the upright position before moving on.

Reach to the Sky

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Raise both arms overhead so that your hands are intertwined with palms together. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and relax.



Reach Back

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold your arms out to the sides with thumbs pointing down. Slowly move both arms back until you feel tension. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and relax.



Arm Circles

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold arms straight out to the side with your palms facing up. Start moving your arms slowly in small circles and gradually make larger and larger circles. Come back to the starting position and reverse the direction of your arm swing.



Toe Touch

While seated, extend both legs in front of you. Keep your back straight and reach for your toes with both hands without bouncing. Do not bend your knees. Hold this stretch for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat.

Twister

Sit on a mat with your right leg straight in front of you. Bend your left leg and cross it over your right leg so that your left foot is alongside your right knee. Bring your right elbow across your body and place it on the outside of your left thigh near the knee. Slowly twist your body as you look over your left shoulder. Your right elbow should be exerting pressure against your left thigh. Hold the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds, relax, and repeat for the other side.



Knee to Chest

Lie on your back on a mat with your legs straight. Bend your left knee and bring it up toward your chest. Grasp the underside of your thigh and slowly pull your thigh to your chest. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Release, and repeat with the right leg.



Butterfly

Sit on a mat with your knees bent. Put the soles of your feet (or shoes) together and hold onto your ankles. Place your elbows on the inner sides of your knees and slowly apply downward pressure until you feel tension. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat.



Hurdler's Stretch

While seated, place one foot on the inside of the other leg just above your knee. Keep the other leg extended and straight. With your back straight, press forward toward the thigh of your extended leg. Use your hands for support. When you feel some tension in the back of your leg hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Do not bounce while holding this stretch. Repeat twice with legs in each position.



Thigh Stretch

Keep your body upright and place the ankle of one of your legs in the hand on the same side of your body. Be sure to keep the leg you are stretching underneath your body and close to the other leg. Hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds once you feel some tension in the front of your leg. Repeat twice with each leg.



Calf Stretch

Place your hands against a wall while standing upright. Bend one knee slightly in front of your body while you extend the opposite leg backward until the foot is placed flat on the floor. With your back straight, you should feel some tension in the back of your leg. Hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds and repeat twice with each leg.

Child's Pose

Kneel down and sit back on your feet with your heels pointing outward. Rest your forehead on the floor, relaxing your face, neck, and shoulders. Bring your arms alongside your body with palms turned toward the ceiling. Take 10 to 15 deep, slow breaths. Roll body back up and back down to repeat.



Cat and Camel

On your hands and knees with your head parallel to the floor, arch your back and then let it slowly sag toward the floor. Try to keep your arms straight.

Aerobic Exercises

Aerobic exercises help you increase your cardiorespiratory fitness. See below for a few examples of activities that you can do that will help you improve your cardiorespiratory fitness.

- Bicycling
- Swimming
- Skating (Rollerblading)
- Running/Jogging/Walking/Hiking
- Cross-country Skiing
- Hurdler's Jumps
- Lateral Jumps
- Running Zig-Zags
- Soccer
- Full-court Basketball
- Singles Racquetball/Tennis/Badminton



Muscular Strength and Endurance Exercises

After you have warmed up you can begin to perform exercises that will strengthen your muscles and improve your muscular endurance. When doing these exercises always make sure you are using the correct form. Doing excessive repetitions or lifting more weight does not make you stronger sooner. By trying to do too much when performing strengthening exercises you can increase your risk of injury. Always pay attention to your body and its safety. Performing the exercises listed here can improve your strength and muscular endurance.



Crunch

Lie down on the floor with your legs bent and your feet placed flat on the floor. Cross your arms on your chest. Lift your chest toward your knees until your shoulders come off of the floor. Lie back down once your shoulders come off the floor. Repeat for a predetermined number of repetitions.



Leg Lift

Lie on the floor with your back parallel to the floor. Place your hands alongside your body, extending your legs toward the ceiling. Lower your legs without them touching the floor. Lift your legs back to the starting position, repeating 8 to 12 times.





Push-Away

Start developing your upper body with the push-away until you can comfortably do three sets of 10 in one workout.



Bent Knee Push-up

Once you meet your goal for push-aways, try the bent-knee push-up, starting with two sets of 5 and increasing until you can do two sets of 10 in a single workout.



Right Angle Push-up

You should lie face down with your hands under your shoulders, fingers straight, with legs straight, parallel, and slightly apart; your toes should support your feet. Straighten your arms while keeping your back and knees straight, and lower your body until you have a 90-degree angle at the elbows. Repeat for a predetermined number of repetitions. This exercise can also be done with bent knees.



Modified Pull-up

Place a pole or pipe that will support your body weight on the seat of two chairs that are about four feet apart. Lie on your back underneath the bar and grasp it with both hands about shoulder width apart. Pull your chest up to the bar, keeping your body straight from head to toe. Lower your body back to the floor; repeat for a predetermined number of repetitions.





Dip/Chair Dip

If you have a dip bar, place your hands on the bars with your arms straight and your feet hanging free. Lower your body by bending your elbows until your arms are bent at a 90-degree angle. Repeat for a predetermined number of repetitions. Also, you can do these with chairs as support if you do not have the proper dip bar. Place two chairs approximately shoulder width apart and use the arms of the chairs as your support. Place both feet together in front of you with your heels resting on the floor and legs straight. Perform the dip the same as it was performed on a dip bar.

Cool Down



Once you have completed exercising you are ready to cool down. It is just as important to cool down after exercise as it is to warm up before exercise. When you cool down you should let your breathing return to normal. It is best to walk around for a few minutes to make sure your breathing is normal and let your heartbeat slow down. After you have walked around for a few minutes following vigorous exercise you are ready to begin your cool-down stretches.

The stretching exercises you do after exercise can be the same exercises you did for your warm-up or you can add other stretches. Most importantly you should stretch all major muscle groups, especially those that you used during exercise.



The Health Fitness Award

Another program of the President's Challenge is the Health Fitness Award (HFA). This award is very similar to the Presidential Physical Fitness Award and can be achieved if you reach the scores for your age group on the chart below. By reaching these scores you will have attained "a healthy level of fitness."

Most of the events of the Health Fitness Award are the same as the Presidential Physical Fitness Award, with the addition of a measure of body fat, the Body Mass Index (BMI).



The following items make up the Health Fitness Award:

1. Partial curl-ups
2. One Mile Run/Walk or the appropriate distance options for age
3. V-sit Reach or the Sit and Reach option
4. Right angle push-ups or the Pull-up option
5. Body Mass Index (BMI)

	Age	Partial Curl-Ups (#)	One-Mile Run (min:sec)	Distance Option		V-Sit Reach (inches)	Sit and Reach (cm)		Rt. Angle Push-Ups (#)	Pull-Ups (#)	BMI (range)
				OR	1/4 mile		OR	1/2 mile			
BOYS	6	12	13:00	2:30	4:45 4:35	1	21	3	1	13.3-19.5	
	7	12	12:00			2:20	1	21	4	1	13.3-19.5
	8	15	11:00			1	21	5	1	13.4-20.5	
	9	15	10:00			1	21	6	1	13.7-21.4	
	10	20	9:30			1	21	7	1	14.0-22.5	
	11	20	9:00			1	21	8	2	14.0-23.7	
	12	20	9:00			1	21	9	2	14.8-24.1	
	13	25	8:00			1	21	10	2	15.4-24.7	
	14	25	8:00			1	21	12	3	16.1-25.4	
	15	30	7:30			1	21	14	4	16.6-26.4	
16	30	7:30		1	21	16	5	17.2-26.8			
17	30	7:30		1	21	18	6	17.7-27.5			
GIRLS	6	12	13:00	2:50 2:40	5:35 5:25	2	23	3	1	13.1-19.6	
	7	12	12:00			2	23	4	1	13.1-19.6	
	8	15	11:00			2	23	5	1	13.2-20.7	
	9	15	10:00			2	23	6	1	13.5-21.4	
	10	20	10:00			2	23	7	1	13.8-22.5	
	11	20	10:00			2	23	7	1	14.1-23.2	
	12	20	10:30			2	23	8	1	14.7-24.2	
	13	25	10:30			3	25	7	1	15.5-25.3	
	14	25	10:30			3	25	7	1	16.2-25.3	
	15	30	10:00			3	25	7	1	16.6-26.5	
16	30	10:00		3	25	7	1	16.8-26.5			
17	30	10:00		3	25	7	1	17.1-26.9			

Criterion standards listed above adapted from Amateur Athletic Union Physical Fitness Program; AAHPERD Physical Best; Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research, Fitnessgram; Corbin, C. & Lindsey, R., *Fitness for Life*, 4th edition; and YMCA Youth Fitness Test.

Body Mass Index



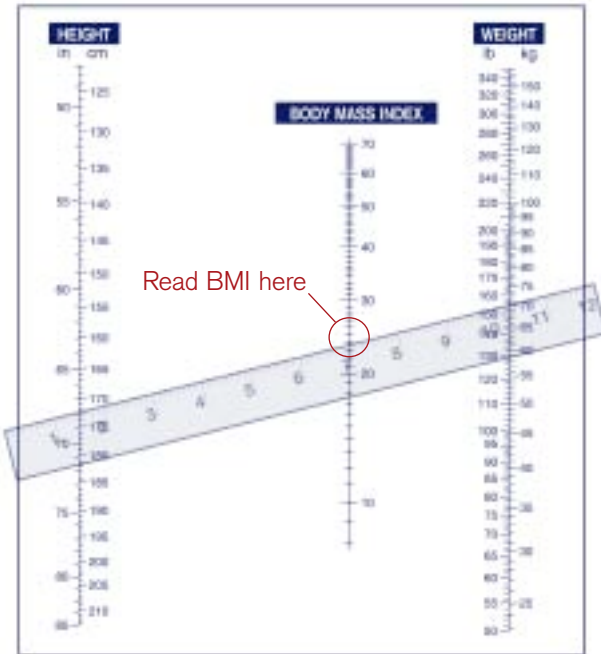
The final item of the Health Fitness Award is Body Mass Index (BMI). This is used to compare your weight relative to your height and to estimate your total body fat. Here is how to calculate your BMI: $w(\text{kg}) / h(\text{m})^2$

- Step One:** Convert your weight to kilograms (kg) 2.2 lbs = 1 kg
- Step Two:** Convert your height to meters (m) 1 inch = .0254m
- Step Three:** Square your height height x height
- Step Four:** Divide your weight by your height squared $w(\text{kg}) / h(\text{m})^2$

Example

A 16-year-old boy who weighs 154 pounds (70 kg), and is 68 inches tall (1.727 meters) has a BMI of:

$$\frac{70 \text{ kg}}{(1.727\text{m})^2} = \frac{70}{2.98} \approx 23.5 \text{ kg/m}^2$$



Based on the BMI range for a 16-year-old boy listed in the table at right, a BMI index of 23.5 puts this boy in the desirable range. Use this BMI chart for quick calculation. Use a ruler to connect the height column to the weight column and read the BMI number in the middle.

Modified with permission from David C. Nieman, *Fitness and Sports Medicine: A Health-Related Approach*, (3rd edition), Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 1995.

Accommodating Those with Disabilities



President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Statement of Policy

Students with disabilities or special needs have the right to an individualized physical fitness program. Thus, the PCPFS includes suggested guidelines for accommodating these students in its President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards Program. The suggestions for accommodation have been prepared to permit boys and girls with disabilities, ages 6–17, to be acknowledged for their achievement and to qualify for any one of the awards offered through the President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards Program.

Teachers or fitness leaders may decide that other students without identified disabilities also need accommodations in one or more of the test categories or awards. Making accommodations is consistent with the goal of providing motivation for life-long physical activity through physical fitness achievement.

Instructors, using their professional judgement, may qualify students who do not reach PCPFS standards on one or more of the test items in the awards program.

For more information on physical activity for those with disabilities, please visit the National Center for Physical Activity and Disability Web site at www.ncpad.org.



Challenge Your Mind with this Get Fit Puzzle.

L H P R S O F C Y C T M G N S
H A W A Y T R O H T Z E O M K
E Z N P R U R A O D O I O O C
A I Q O N T L E Q Z P L I T Y
L A Z C I L I G T M N U R I T
T S H M E T V C A C J Q B V I
H J A N B A A H I A H X G A V
X C G S Y Z C N K P Q V S T I
D E S I C R E X E N A J Y I T
E G F I T N E S S T A N E O C
P R E S I D E N T I A L T N A
I B A Z I Q S S U G C O D A P
M T Z L C Q N H D S O S S Z J
T L M E C N A R U D N E S N F
R V G W K Y G M Y C X K Z C L

**Search across, down, or diagonally for the following words in the
this puzzle:**

ACTIVITY

CHALLENGE

CHAMPION

CRUNCH

ENDURANCE

EXERCISE

FITNESS

HEALTH

MOTIVATION

MUSCLE

NATIONAL

PARTICIPANT

PRESIDENTIAL

RUN

STRETCH



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