

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS REGARDING EXERCISING AT THE GYM

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Abstract

Nowadays, Physical Education professors are trying to identify new methods of teaching in the present climate and that is why, we have considered useful the mixing of theoretical information with the practical ones. The paper is part of a more complex guide that contains theoretical information to support students and teachers of physical education in higher education with current information. We have chosen the information through a questionnaire given to 385 students. Most of whom (78,4%) think that theoretical information could be helpful, while 40,5% prefer theoretical information about gym activity. This guide contains a lot of theoretical information, but in this paper, I have presented just the theoretical information concerning fitness since a high number of students have desired so. This essay presents information about: establishing objectives, common sense rules in a gym, avoiding accidents and preparing your body for effort. In our opinion this theoretical information can be offered to students on educational online platforms, or during Physical Education lessons

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1. Introduction

At university level, physical education has as primary objectives the improvement of quality of life through ameliorating or maintaining the health status, but also through creating a routine to independently exercise during one's free time[1], [2]. The students' fitness level can affect their performance at work and also their health. [3]

Recent studies [4] [5] suggest that the students' physical level preparation

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is low. Other authors [6] [7] consider that most graduates do not have the necessary knowledge to exercise by themselves.

From my personal experience during the Physical Education lessons at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, I have noticed that students do not have the basic knowledge to do exercises. This type of information could be helpful for them on a daily basis.

After making these observations, I considered necessary to create an updated guide with theoretical information to help the students, but also the Physical Education professors. I have chosen the information through a questionnaire given to 385 students. Most of whom (78,4%) think that theoretical information could be helpful, while 40,5% prefer theoretical information about gym activity. This guide contains a lot of theoretical information, but in this paper, I have presented just the theoretical information concerning fitness since a high number of students have desired so.

2. Establishing objectives

One's fitness level differs according to the objectives of every age category, but also to the preparation level. For a young couch potato, fitness is the ability to sustain the effort imposed by student and social life; for a sportsperson we should add the desire to achieve some sports goals to the aforementioned elements. For a young adult, fitness is the ability to finish a day's work or a week's worth, while exercising regularly; and for the final category, the elderly, fitness is the ability to do daily activities without help and to handle disease which is more frequent at this age.

Usually, when someone wishes to begin doing fitness, that person is sedentary, has an inappropriate diet, has vices, sleeps little and most likely has a few extra pounds. These people should focus on improving their quality of life and not on losing weight fast. If the focus is on losing weight fast, one could do mistakes (such as starving and following various online diets, using pills etc) which could lead to disease. Even if one succeeds in losing the weight and get to their goal, they can easily give up and ignore the diet, putting back the weight they had so easily lost in a very short period of time.

When we start a fitness program, it is very important to decide on the long term goals. It is very important to set objectives in order to achieve what one desires. If milestones which cannot be reached were established, one can become demotivated, frustrated or even quit. In order to set correct objectives, one must answer the following questions.

- What do we want to obtain?

Strengthening your muscles, improving the sports performance, ameliorating the quality of life etc. are general objectives. In order to be clear, these objectives need to become specific: losing 3 kilograms, can run 5 km, go to the gym 3 times a week.



- How do we know we have achieved our objectives?

If the objectives we set are measurable and if we set a time limit as well, they will be more efficient: eg. I wish to lose 2 kg per month in 3 months' time. Such objectives when accomplished gives satisfaction and the desire to continue.

- Are our objectives achievable? Do we have the necessary resources to accomplish them?

The established objectives should be of medium difficulty and realistic. Establishing difficult objectives can lead to failure and consequently to frustration. Then we establish the long term and short-term objectives (the ones for each training session). Depending on how many training sessions we will do per week, the targeted muscle groups can be chosen. Then an exercise program can be created and we need to make sure the short term goals are exactly the desired ones.

The main objective is to radically change the way of life into a healthy one. This change cannot happen immediately, but in time by giving up on the vices and unhealthy food.

After accomplishing a long term goal, we can talk about rewards. Consequently, after a couple of months it will be easier and easier to do exercises.

3. Common sense rules in a gym

The gym is a public space and in order to have a successful training session, we must follow the rules so as not to disturb the others.

- Be careful with your hygiene. Go to the gym after having a shower, with the correct, decent and clean gym attire (clothes and shoes), confidently use deodorants and under no circumstances should you pour a whole perfume bottle on yourself so that the others cannot breathe.

- Clean up after yourself. Use a towel to put under you when using the gym machines so you do not touch someone else's sweat and you will not sweat on the machines. Put back all the equipment you have used (dumbbells, mats etc.) after you finished using them. Unload the weights and put them on the rack (and not down, next to the machine). Put wrappers and bottles in the bin.

- Avoid long discussions. Do not forget you are there to train, but if you still do it, try to keep the machines free so that other people can use them while you are chatting. Do not keep them occupied, there are others who want to train as well.

- Be patient and do not stop or rush someone who is using the machine you also want to use.

- Do not stare and do not bother other people.

- Do not do more noise than necessary. Try to put the weights back easily, do not throw them and be careful what sounds you make. It is normal to pant, but do not howl.



4. Avoiding accidents

Accidents happen when you overstrain yourself during the training session, but they are also caused by problems which become worse as time passes by and we do not know the exact cause of them. These accidents are obstacles in reaching our goals.

The intense activity at the gym can cause backaches, joint, tendons, ligament or muscle pain. These do not happen randomly or because you had bad luck, but they have causes which can be avoided if you understand certain aspects. Undoubtedly, you will think you are young and such things do not affect you, but if you want to continue your training for a longer period of time, you need to learn how to avoid accidents.

4.1 Causes

- When you do not stretch or you do it, but superficially
- Ignoring certain muscles during training - for each group of muscles, you should do various types of exercises, not just one or two. It is also necessary to include posture improving exercises to reduce unbalance and consequently, accidents
 - Exaggeration or a quick rise in the number of exercises, sets or weights. It is normal to increase the number of sets or weights, but it needs to be done gradually and not suddenly.
 - Training sessions that are too long or occur too often. The quantity depends on the physical condition and way of life. For example, if you sleep less and you smoke, drink alcohol and you want to do 5 intense training sessions per week you can hurt yourself.
 - Badly chosen exercises. Certain exercises do not fit everyone. Try to find out information from a specialist who will guide you to pick the exercises that fit you, according to your mobility and physical abilities.
 - Badly executed exercises. An incorrect technique can lead to hurting your tendons, ligaments and muscles. It is very important to pay attention to the execution of exercises with weights. A wrong technique will not help you achieve your goals.

4.2 Preventing accidents

- When entering the gym, it is very important not to skip warming up, which should be a minimum of 8-10 minutes and at the end of the training session, you should stretch for 10 minutes.
 - Hydrate before, during and after the training session. Dehydration can lead to tiredness and dizziness.
 - Use the correct technique.



- If an exercise is causing you discomfort or pain, you need to stop.
- When you use heavy weights stay focused because any moment of carelessness can lead to severe accidents.
- Do not tire yourself completely. When you use very heavy weights, it is important to stop one set before complete exhaustion, thus avoiding accidents.
- At the beginning, when you start going to the gym, it is recommended you start with a personal coach, who will help you execute the exercises well, create a personalized program for you and will help you find the motivation to not give up
- Resting is important. During your break days, the muscles improve and your body recovers. For this reason, it's important to sleep at least 7 hours a night.

5. Preparing your body for effort - warming up

Preparing your body for effort - or short, warming up can be defined as the process to physically and psychologically adapt your body to the effort. In other words, the human body needs a period of accommodation to transit from a resting mood to physical effort, so that it can reach a high potential.

The purpose of warming up is to avoid accidents and better prepare the body for training. Its purpose is not to tire you. The exercises' intensity gradually increases to avoid tiredness and decreased performance.

Warming up is important because:

- It gradually increases the cardiac rhythm and with it, the sanguine flux so that the muscles receive more blood, and implicitly more oxygen and the joints become more elastic;
- The body temperature rises and all the biochemical and physiological reactions happen quicker and more precise;
- Oxygenated muscles (warmed-up) answer better to effort;
- Reduces the risk of accidents;
- The brain sends the nerve impulses quicker and the body can execute the moves faster;
- During this step in your training, you mentally prepare for the effort that is to come.

Warming up is divided into general and specific.

The general warming up's objective is the body's preparation through exercises that prepare a bigger muscle group.

The specific warming up's objective is the body's preparation for certain types of actions and directing the blood towards the muscle that will be exposed to effort.

Practically, at the beginning we should do a general warm up which includes walking, running, joint exercises etc for 5-10 minutes, followed by the specific 5-6-minute specific warming up, which includes exercises for the muscular groups that will work during that training session.



6. Conclusions

- Nowadays, Physical Education professors are trying to identify new methods of teaching in the present climate and that is why, we have considered useful the mixing of theoretical information with the practical ones.

- Before starting a physical activity, it is recommended for each student to establish some correct objectives. On the long term, they should also think what they want to achieve.

- The gym is a public space and in order to have a successful session, you need to respect some rules of conduct, so as not to disturb the others

- Accidents at the gym are quite frequent, and for this reason, you must not skip the warming up at the beginning and not over the stretching at the end, talk to a personal coach to execute the exercises correctly and for you not to tire yourself.

- Warming up should not be superficial because you can expose yourself to a lot of needless risks and at the same time you will sabotage your efficiency and the capacity to perform.

- 78,4% of the students we have asked, consider these pieces of information useful

- We think this theoretical information can be offered to students on educational online platforms, or during Physical Education lessons.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to this study and should be considered as main authors.

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