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Physical Activity: SWIMMING

While participants are swimming, they are getting lots of health benefits. The information in this packet details those benefits, from the muscles swimming develops to the way it makes people feel.

This packet supplements what you will be doing during swimming. You do have to get participants to recognize that this activity is great for their physical and emotional health, but you can do that in the way that best works for your group and you. These materials offer lots of different ideas for incorporating the health components into your already fabulously planned session.

Read the Facilitator's Guide in order to understand Frost Valley's physical activity initiative, to effectively use the materials in your session, and for ways to encourage physical activity among your participants in and beyond Frost Valley.

This chart, also featured in the Facilitator's Guide, highlights each of the sections in this module. This can guide you in selecting what to focus on during the session.

Description	Gives a profile of swimming's health benefits
Type of Activity	Explains how swimming is aerobic
Where It Fits within the Recommended Amount of Physical Activity	Points out where swimming fits within the suggested recommended 60 minutes of daily exercise
Parts of Body Used	Names parts of the body that swimming uses
Muscles Affected	Names the specific muscles that swimming builds
Health Benefits	Lists swimming's overall health benefits
How It Makes You Feel	Explains swimming's positive emotional benefits
Suggestions for Ways to Incorporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day 1: Offers suggestions for introducing swimming's health benefits during the first day of the session• Following Sessions: Gives lots of ideas for reinforcing participants' knowledge of swimming's health benefits during the remaining sessions
Some Fun Ideas	Offers ideas for games and other activities that build participant awareness of swimming's health benefits
Interesting Facts	Generates interest in swimming
Evaluation	Presents a modifiable questionnaire about participants' views on swimming and about whether they will continue beyond Frost Valley

DESCRIPTION

Swimming is one of the most popular sports in the United States among people of all ages and physical abilities! It works your whole body. And it is enjoyable!

In swimming, muscles and different body parts work together as you kick, push, and pull yourself through the water. This aerobic activity works muscles (especially core) harder because of water resistance. Swimming strengthens, lengthens, and brings more flexibility to your muscles, but does not stress them or the joints, so there is little chance of injury.

Swimming gets your heart pumping and your oxygen levels up, both of which help your muscles! It develops coordination (for example, it fine-tunes the timing of the arms, the core, and kicking movements) and endurance, enabling you to swim faster and longer, and making you more energetic in your daily life! Swimming also increases athletic ability.

Swimming is not only fun, it is also important for water safety. Knowing how to swim can prevent you from drowning because you know how to handle yourself in the water. And it's easier to learn how to swim when you are young. (Adults have a tougher time!) Once you can swim, you can do it all your life because it is low impact – easy on the muscles and the joints.

Swimming is a calming sport; people like the way the water makes them feel as they glide through it.

In camp, you will probably use five main swimming strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and sidestroke. They all provide similar benefits, but each one also works certain parts of the body more than others.

And, most likely, you will just be having some fun in the water, instead of participating in structured swim instruction. This is great because water play is EXCELLENT for your health...and really fun, of course. Here are some of the terrific benefits of water play:

- Getting outdoors and in the sun (which is a great source of Vitamin D that helps the body absorb calcium and maintain adequate calcium levels)
- Doing all sorts of movements (jumping, diving, running, swimming, splashing)
- Exercising and burning energy
- Strengthening muscles

TYPE OF ACTIVITY: Aerobic

Swimming can be an easy, low-intensity activity or can provide highly rigorous aerobic training.

WHERE IT FITS WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Swimming can fulfill some or all of the recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity, especially in the aerobics category. If you swim regularly at moderate intensity for at least 20 minutes, you will begin to see an increase in your stamina and in your lungs' ability to deliver oxygen to your body.

PARTS OF BODY USED	MUSCLES AFFECTED (See <i>Terms to Know</i> in Facilitator's Guide)	HEALTH BENEFITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper and lower legs • Arms • Shoulder & neck • Back • Chest • Torso • Hips • Calves • Feet • Lungs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triceps — freestyle, backstroke • Traps (<i>Trapezius</i>)—butterfly • Biceps—freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke • Abs (<i>Abdominals</i>) — freestyle, backstroke, butterfly • Hamstrings — backstroke, breaststroke • Delts (<i>Deltoids</i>)—freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly • Glutes (<i>Gluteals</i>) — freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly • Pecs (<i>Pectorals</i>)—freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly • Quads(<i>Quadriceps</i>) freestyle, breaststroke • Calf/foot —backstroke, breaststroke • Heart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the heart and lungs • Increases stamina and endurance • Improves balance and posture • Enhances breathing capacity

HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL

- Relaxes you, especially from floating and sliding in the water
- Makes you want to swim more because the sport is easy on the bones and joints
- Brightens your mood
- Energizes you

SUGGESTIONS FOR WAYS TO INCORPORATE

DAY 1

1. When introducing the swimming program, begin by asking participants:
 - Who likes to swim? Tell us what you like about swimming.
 - Where do you swim? Is that your favorite place to swim? Why?
 - How often do you swim?
 - Do you swim by yourself or on a team? Do you just like to have fun in the water — splashing, jumping, diving, swimming underwater?
 - If you're just learning to swim, what do you think you might like about it?
 - Is swimming just for fun, or is it also good for your body? Explain why you think it's good for your body.

Explain that swimming works the whole body. Ask questions like: What parts of the body does swimming affect? How does swimming make you feel, even when you are just playing around? Share benefits, building on participants' responses.

2. If introducing and modeling strokes, participants can learn about the different parts of the body involved in swimming. A participant, if preferred, can show everyone what a particular stroke looks like (this can take place on land or in the water). While the stroke is being modeled, ask the group what parts of the body seem to be getting a workout. Affirm what they say — arms, shoulders, etc.

3. Since it is most likely that participants will be involved in informal water play, have them share what they do in the water that is FUN and how they think that informal water activity benefits their health.

FOLLOWING SESSIONS

1. If swim instruction is part of the program, participants can learn a new stroke each day (including the sidestroke). They can compare the new stroke to the one(s) they have already learned to determine whether the same or different muscles are worked; the same or different parts of the body are used; which strokes are more difficult; if breathing is harder or easier, etc. Participants can decide which stroke they like best and/or is better exercise. They can add to this activity by doing the stroke they have just learned, then jumping up and giving a specific reason that it's a good exercise (works the back, good for breathing, etc.). They can do this several times, each time coming up with another reason.

2. Begin sessions with warm-up exercises/drills for building the skills and muscles connected with the last stroke(s) participants learned. See Swim Warm-Ups and Games below.

3. Games are a good way to engage participants at all levels of swimming. They not only bolster skills, but also get participants having fun and feeling more comfortable in the water. Participants can focus on specific muscles and/or breathing techniques in order to become more efficient swimmers. See Swim Warm-Ups and Games below.

4. Encourage participants to engage in some dry-land cross-training exercises or activities (i.e., soccer, dance, baseball/softball, volleyball, gymnastics, jumping rope, brisk walking) to build swimming muscles. They can incorporate these activities into their recommended daily 60 minutes of exercise.

SOME FUN IDEAS

1. Encourage participants to try a new activity at camp and to compare it with swimming.

2. Challenge participants to come up with a swimming game that works on a specific aspect of swimming —a stroke, a muscle, the use of a body part, breathing, etc. Have them try it out with their peers.

3. One way to measure the amount of daily physical activity is by counting the number of steps taken in a day. Typically, there are 2,000 steps per mile (about 30 minutes of continuous activity). You can measure steps with a pedometer for sports like walking, hiking, and running. But, you need to use a conversion chart for other sports, like swimming. Here is the minutes-step conversion for swimming:

SWIMMING	10 min.	15 min.	20 min.	30 min.	60 min.
# OF STEPS	1,661	2,492	3,323	4,984	9,969

There are recommended guidelines for the number of steps that provide moderate to physical activity and can add up to the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity. For young people, 9,000 steps is the magic number.

Participants can chart the number of steps they have taken in a day, including swimming, general walking (using a pedometer), and other activities. Post the Step Conversion Chart on page 12 of the Facilitator’s Guide for participants to see, and/or distribute it so they can refer to it at the end of each day. Have participants share their step rates, looking at increased activity, the effect on their bodies, etc.

4. A variation on step-based measurement of physical activity is looking at equivalent miles: 2,000 steps equal one mile; 10,000 equal 5 miles. Post the Time Equivalent of 1 Mile or 2000 Steps for Various Activities chart on pages 13-15 of the Facilitator’s Guide for participants to see, and/or distribute it so they can refer to it at the end of each day. Have participants share how many steps they took/miles they covered.

SWIMMING: Interesting facts

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract of the United States 2012, swimming is the most popular recreational activity for children and teens (ages 7–17); 36% of youth in these age groups participate in swimming at least six times a year.

Kyoko Iwasaki of Japan won the gold medal in the 200-meter breaststroke in the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, making her, at the age of 14 years and 6 days, the youngest swimmer ever to claim an Olympic title.ⁱ

In September 2014, Charlotte Samuels, a 16-year-old from Ridgewood, New Jersey, made history by becoming the youngest person ever to achieve the Triple Crown of open-water swimming. After circumnavigating Manhattan in July and swimming the 20-mile Catalina Channel off the coast of California in August, she swam across the English Channel in 20 hours, 44 minutes, and 27 seconds.ⁱⁱ

According to Olympic.org, the official website of the Olympic movement:

- Prehistoric man learned to swim in order to cross rivers and lakes, evidenced by Stone Age cave paintings found in Egypt that depict swimmers. Swimming was also referred to in Greek mythology.
- Swimming was not widely practiced until the early 19th century, when the National Swimming Society of Great Britain began to hold competitions. Most early swimmers used the breaststroke or a form of it.
- Swimming has been featured in all Olympic program editions since 1896. The very first Olympic events were freestyle (crawl) and breaststroke. Backstroke was added in 1904.

The world's largest outdoor swimming pool, completed in 2006, is located at the San Alfonso del Mar resort in Algarrobo, Chile. The pool, which is estimated to have cost more than \$1 billion to construct, is 3,324 feet long, covering nearly 20 acres.ⁱⁱⁱ

EVALUATION

1. How FUN would you say swimming is? Choose the number that shows what you think.

3 = A lot of fun **2** = Pretty fun **1** = A little fun **0** = No fun

2. How HEALTHY would you say swimming is? Choose the number that shows what you think.

3 = Very healthy **2** = Pretty healthy **1** = A little healthy **0** = Not healthy

3. Which parts of your body would you say got the best workout from swimming?

- Legs
 - Hips
 - Shoulders and neck
 - Lower back
 - Heart
 - Lungs
 - Whole body
-

4. How often might you participate in swimming again at Frost Valley? Choose the number that shows what you think.

3 = Very often **2** = Pretty often **1** = Rarely **0** = Never

5. How often might you participate in swimming again after leaving Frost Valley? Choose the number that shows what you think.

3 = Often **2** = Sometimes **1** = Not very often **0** = Hardly ever
(everyday) (once a week) (once a month) (once a year)

ENDNOTES

ⁱOlympic.org, “Kyoko Iwasaki” [Internet -WWW, URL] <http://www.olympic.org/news/kyoko-iwasaki/177542>.

ⁱⁱhttp://www.nj.com/bergen/index.ssf/2014/09/ridgewood_teen_breaks_world_record_with_swim_across_english_channel.html; <http://www.northjersey.com/news/ridgewood-teen-becomes-youngest-to-complete-triple-crown-of-swimming-1.1082700>.

ⁱⁱⁱDarcy, Oliver, “An Impressive Artificial Paradise: Take a Look at the World’s Largest Pool — It’s Probably Bigger Than You’d Expect” [Internet -WWW, URL] <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/07/12/an-impressive-artificial-paradise-take-a-look-at-the-worlds-largest-pool-its-probably-bigger-than-you-d-expect/>, 12 July 2014.