

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A MEANS OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND PHYSICAL
CULTURE OF STUDENTS**

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ANNOTATION: At present, it has become necessary to clearly distinguish and understand the concepts closely related to physical activity — such as physical and harmonious development, physical maturity, human bodily perfection, physical culture and its components (physical education, physical preparedness, fitness, sports), as well as the concept of a healthy lifestyle and health-improving training.

KEY WORDS: Physical activity, abdominal exercises, muscle strength, muscle tone decrease, pancreas, reduced work capacity, active muscular function.

“Nature never stops in its movements and punishes any inactivity, whether mental or physical,” wrote J.W. Goethe. Unfortunately, many young people today prefer a sedentary lifestyle, mistakenly believing that less movement helps them “save” the body’s functional reserves for the future.

A comparative analysis of the physical preparedness of more than 300 third-year students of Fergana State University with their first-year results revealed the following noteworthy findings:

- a) the speed qualities of male students decreased by 3.2%;
- b) endurance decreased by 2.7%;
- c) coordination decreased by 1.7%;
- d) the most significant decline was observed in flexibility.

This shows that many students do not fully understand the relationship between physical activity and health, preferring passive lifestyles. Excessive use of digital technologies, internet addiction, and long hours in front of screens have sharply reduced the time budget for physical exercise or participation in mass sports. As a result, physical inactivity has become widespread, and the habit of limited movement is observed throughout daily life.

The reduction of physical activity, or *hypokinesia*, and insufficient movement, or *hypodynamia*, have become negative legacies of the 20th century, continuing as major health issues of our time. The weakness of muscles poses a danger to human health as serious as the lack of air or vitamins. Experiments conducted by M.M. Krugly and S.B. Lezhneva (1985) showed that when healthy individuals were prohibited from physical activity for several weeks, they experienced weight loss, muscle atrophy, and functional disorders of the heart and lungs. However, after resuming even minimal physical movement, their physiological functions quickly began to recover.

American scientist D. Wolf (1986) discovered that people with sedentary lifestyles — especially those engaged in mental labor — were ten times more likely to suffer from illnesses compared to those involved in regular physical work or adherents of a healthy lifestyle.

People who claim, “My health is excellent,” often ignore the dangers of physical inactivity or are unaware of its risks. Indeed, various social and biological factors ultimately depend on physical activity. Lack of movement leads to muscle atrophy, decreased endurance, impaired heart and lung function, reduced vitality, lethargy, and the emergence of various illnesses.

As the proverb says, “He who walks much lives long.” By middle age, individuals with low physical activity experience fatty and connective tissue infiltration in heart muscles, reducing their contractile function and arterial elasticity, which in turn raises blood pressure. Impaired

circulation disrupts the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to tissues, causing fatigue, obesity, and other adverse conditions.

Numerous studies confirm that the “reserve potential” of heart function develops through systematic physical training, which strengthens cardiac muscles and increases functional efficiency. For instance, the heart rate of marathon runners can drop to 40–50 beats per minute, indicating high training efficiency and energy economy.

Physical activity also enhances the respiratory and circulatory systems. During exercise, many small blood vessels (capillaries) open, blood flow increases, and rhythmic muscle contractions help venous blood return to the heart.

Abdominal exercises such as sit-ups, climbing, hanging from gymnastic walls, knee raises, running, and jumping help stimulate venous return, prevent abdominal bloating, improve diaphragm breathing, and reduce heart strain.

Balanced daily routines — combining work and rest, sufficient sleep, and exposure to temperature and pressure variations — positively affect hormone balance, metabolism, and overall body adaptation. Disorders in glandular function (adrenal, thyroid, pancreatic) can cause reduced muscle tone, fatigue, and decreased work capacity.

Moderate endurance exercises such as slow long-distance running, resistance band workouts, swimming, and cycling have been shown to improve adrenal gland activity. Group activities, social interactions, and emotional enjoyment from games, dancing, and family recreation increase the production of adrenal cortex hormones (corticosteroids).

Purposeful physical activity enhances the function of the central nervous system, strengthens work discipline, and improves the ability to adapt to changing conditions.

In conclusion, physical activity remains the foundation of physical development, maturity, and health culture. Active muscular work and the biological impulses it generates have scientifically and practically proven positive effects on all bodily functions.

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