# Sports

"You Never Outgrow Your Need For 'Recess' " - Diamond

Starting an exercise regime is great for the body, right? Well, not only can involvement in sports be physically beneficial, but emotionally as well. Although those who don't exercise commonly use the excuse "I don't have time", many psychologists argue that time should be set aside for physical activity. Any type of exercise has three basic benefits for the human body : it burns calories and builds muscle, it triggers the production of hormones, and it allows the body to naturally release stress. It is the last two of these items that are addressed in this paper.

In today's health conscious world many people exercise regularly at home, or belong to a fitness club. Teenagers, however, tend to select a organized sports team to keep in shape, in addition to the social atmosphere they offer. Participating in a sport "has been shown ... to reduce anxiety levels, ... stabilize personality and increase self-confidence and optimism."(Constable) So, those students involved in sports at school will feel more relaxed, and content about daily life than those students not exercising at all. Thus, the students should be able to cope more easily with stress. All sustained, rhythmic, self-regulated physical exercise not only " ... uses up the extra adrenaline that stress stimulates, but it also increases your sense of control, distracts you from your stressors, gives you a sense of accomplishment, and leaves your muscles relaxed."(Witkin) If a student chooses to be active the benefits aren't only what can be seen by the naked eye, but also on a spiritual and emotional level.

To test the effects of physical activity on the level of stress it was necessary to categorize the amount of activity into four groups: those who don't participate in sports, those who spend 1-10 hours per week in a sport, those who spend 11-20 hours, and those who spend 21-30 hours per week in a sport. Keeping in mind that we only tested the physical effects of stress on the body the results are as follows. The stress level of those teens not involved in any sport is 9.47. Those students who exercised between 1 and 10 hours per week have an average stress level of 9.79. Of the teens who participated in a sport for 11-20 hours a week, their stress is 8.78. And those students who spend 21-30 hours each week being physically active have a stress level of 9.20. It is somewhat surprising to see that the level of stress for the non-active group is so low. However, with exercise comes physical injuries. Many of the common physical signs of stress are also associated with sports injuries. So, the high level of stress for the active groups could be due to soreness for participating in the sport, rather than stress. The data shows that the ideal amount of physical exercise is from 11 to 20 hours per week. This amount allows for the maximum benefits of exercise, while not spending so much time that other responsibilities aren't tended to. Such a dilemma brings us to the reason why the 21 to 30 hour group has a higher stress level than expected. These teenagers are devoting too much time to their organized sports, and not enough to themselves. Their extensive exercise is obviously taking a toll on their bodies, and probably on thier other responsibilities as well. This would therefore increase their level of stress because they have even more to worry about, and most likely lack time management skills.

Analysis of Variance  
  
Source DF SS MS F P  
  
Factor 3 32.4 10.8 0.60 0.617  
  
Error 239 4318.5 18.1  
  
Total 242 4351.0  
  
 Individual 95% CIs For Mean  
  
 Based on Pooled StDev  
  
Level N Mean StDev -------+---------+---------+---------  
  
no sport 118 9.466 4.199 (----\*----)   
  
sport 1- 52 9.788 4.308 (------\*-------)   
  
sport11- 63 8.778 4.010 (-------\*------)   
  
sport21- 10 9.200 5.884 (----------------\*-----------------)   
  
 -------+---------+---------+---------  
  
Pooled StDev = 4.251 7.5 9.0 10.5