

FITNESS IN THE YOUNG AND ADULT POPULATION; DESIRE AND NECESSITY

GĂLAN, D.

^{1,2} Police Academy "A. I.Cuza"-I.S.O.P, Univ. "Valahia" – Târgoviște
* adnanadumbravu2@gmail.com

Abstract

In a world dominated by the benefits of modern achievements, reflected in increased comfort and increasingly diverse nutrition — mostly composed of processed products — alongside artificial intelligence that reduces and/or limits the practice of physical exercise to the level of just a click, modern individuals face harmful factors affecting their psycho-physical health. These materialize through obesity — with all its consequences — and especially the decline of psycho-motor skills and, quite often, moral-volitional qualities, which tend to become merely formal aspects.

In these conditions, we believe that through our topic we will spark interest in a field that is taking root in our era: FITNESS. Through the quality of our reflections and the content of our topic, we hope to reposition the desire and necessity of engaging in physical activity within the natural framework of human existence.

Key Words: *fitness, psycho-motor qualities, physical activity, health*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Fitness – between Theory and practice

In an era where technology in various fields is advancing at a dizzying pace every day and billions of bits carry information that is hard to access — mainly due to the "compressed" time — physical activity has become a necessity for the psycho-physical balance of the modern human being.

In this context, a concept emerged more than 50 years ago and has developed ever since, considered a "health sport," practiced either through gymnastic exercises or various activities involving weights and/or machines: fitness.

The term *fitness*, found in Anglo-Saxon literature, is equivalent to *physical condition*, representing a motor activity through which an individual achieves a state of well-being, regardless of their anatomical, physiological, or psychological condition.

Consulting specialized literature, we discover that fitness means the regulation of adaptive processes in the human body following physical exertion. In other words, fitness is to the human body what fine-tuning is to an electronic device.

This is reflected in:

- the psycho-physical well-being felt after a fitness session, through reduced muscle tension and body relaxation; a state that is enhanced by a healthy, well-maintained lifestyle, with particular attention to diet, social factors, and consistent motor activities;
- maintaining a harmonious and — especially — healthy body;
- social interaction — when training takes place in an organized setting;
- improvement of coordination skills;
- improvement of concentration capacity;
- improvement of endurance, etc.

Fitness training can be varied: one can perform exercises using their own body weight, partner exercises, or exercises using different equipment (treadmills, bikes, resistance bands, jump ropes, etc.), typically with low to medium effort levels. At the same time, physical exercises used for cardiovascular fitness may incorporate established sports disciplines such as: sport dancing, martial arts elements, jogging, swimming, skiing, cycling, etc.

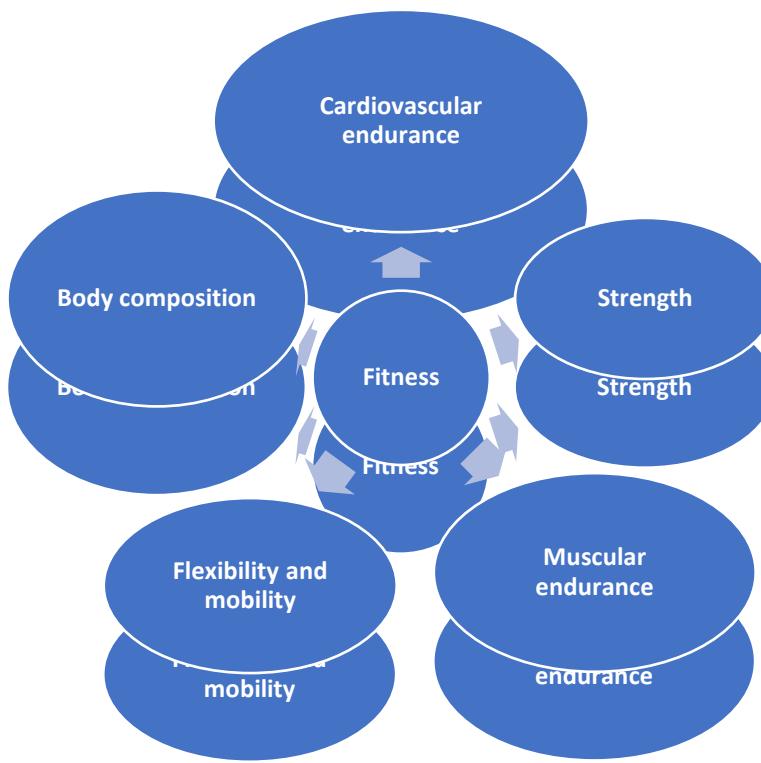
When choosing the type of effort, everyone should opt for what benefits them most, and should keep in mind that well-being is determined by heart rate, which is influenced by effort parameters (intensity, volume, complexity/content).

As is known, monitoring and evaluation of organ and system functions are done by tracking functional parameters expressed through:

- cardio-respiratory endurance, identified as aerobic fitness, indicating the proper functioning of the heart and respiratory system;
- muscular strength and endurance, indicating the volume of effort and energy consumed until the onset of fatigue or muscle soreness;
- flexibility, one of the essential parameters providing information about the physiological potential of joints and ligaments;
- body composition, given by the ratio between fat tissue and muscle mass, relative to weight and height — key indicators of an optimal general state of health.

1.2. The values of fitness: a preamble to fitness training

In a world where everything moves in fast-forward, professional obligations are often prioritized over family responsibilities or individual needs. Fitness training can serve as a release valve for accumulated stress and a means of recalibrating various needs and values toward more balanced levels. These values, which fitness can influence, include:



- maintaining and improving health;
- muscle toning;
- weight loss;
- improving physical condition, etc.

These values are achieved through the core components that define fitness, which can be illustrated in the adjacent diagram (Diagram 2-1).

The next logical question arises: **When can one start practicing fitness?**

Obviously, since fitness equals movement, and movement equals life, engaging in this form of exercise can begin at any age — provided that the training content is selected and adapted according to the individual's age, psycho-physical capacity, and clearly defined objectives (maintaining/improving physical condition, weight loss, medical considerations, etc.).

To initiate a fitness training program, it is necessary to clearly define several stages that will ensure the training's effectiveness. These phases include:

- identifying the training location. If one wishes to work out individually in the comfort of their home, it is important to select appropriate workout programs —

abundantly available online — acquire suitable gear, and designate a proper space. If one prefers to train in an organized setting under professional supervision (gym, park, etc.), it is advisable to consider the distance to the training location, the intended goals, and —importantly — the qualifications of the trainer (typically verified through recommendations and/or online research);

- training content. Regardless of whether the training is individual or guided, any session should start with a minimum of 5–10 minutes of cardio exercises, adapted to the individual's capabilities and the session's objectives, while strictly controlling effort intensity. In the initial phase, long sets, high repetition counts, heavy weights, and multiple sets should be avoided. Special attention should be paid to recovery after training — achieved not necessarily through passive rest, but via active recovery (stretching, light movement games, etc.);

- time of day and training frequency. Based on our target audience, experience, and relevant studies, for satisfactory general psycho-physical conditioning, we recommend two training sessions per week, each lasting 60–90 minutes, preferably in the evening;

- dietary regimen. Although lifestyle changes will occur once fitness training begins, excessive eating — especially high-protein intake — should be avoided. As a general rule, food should not be consumed at least one hour before or after training, except in the case of high-performance athletes who follow different nutritional plans. Everything should be balanced, ideally with a macronutrient distribution of 50% carbohydrates, 35% protein, and 10% fats, as per expert recommendations;

- training journal. The "training journal" refers not only to recording the content of each session (exercises, repetitions, sets, etc.) but also tracking what we eat and how we rest. Hydration is critical — special attention must be paid to water intake. These aspects are essential guarantees for the effectiveness of any fitness program.

1.3. Fitness training: general recommendations and workout program

The actual start of a fitness training session requires a few basic guidelines to ensure it is carried out under optimal conditions and is effective.

Basic Guidelines:

1. Use a measuring device to monitor the volume and intensity of the effort (stopwatch, watch, or phone timer).
2. Follow the instructions and the prescribed exercise order, ensuring correct execution of each movement.
3. Begin the actual training only after completing a warm-up session; also, ensure access to a bottle of water and a towel — these are absolutely necessary.

Workout Program

Among the wide variety of fitness training styles, we strongly recommend Tabata training.

We won't go into detail about the characteristics of this method, but below there is a sample workout, including essential instructions.

Tabata Workout

After a proper warm-up:

- 20 jumping jacks with scissor motion of arms and legs overhead
- *10-second break* – during which no activity is done; just relax and breathe.
- 15–20 standard push-ups (support on palms and toes) or push-ups with knees on the floor, legs together, calves raised
- *10-second break*
- 15–20 squats with jumping
- *10-second break*
- 20 alternating lunges, adopting a wide stance, hands on hips, back straight, performed at a very brisk pace
- *10-second break*
- Korean push-ups (Burpees) – performed at maximum speed for 20 seconds
- *10-second break*
- V-ups (simultaneous lifting of torso and legs, touching toes with fingers) – 20 seconds
- *10-second break*
- Bricege (lifting the trunk and legs simultaneously, touching the toes with the hands) – 20 seconds

- Pause 10 seconds.
- High knees running in place, with fast pace and knees up – 20 seconds
- *10-second break*

After completing one full round, take a 1-minute break – during which you may drink a small amount of water, shake out your arms and legs, and then repeat the sequence.

Depending on the individual's physical condition and goals, 3 to 5, or even 7 rounds may be performed.

1.4. Common mistakes in fitness training

As in any activity, certain actions or behaviors can reduce or even compromise training effectiveness. These mistakes include:

- Not tracking your training or nutrition. This includes: initial and periodic weight measurements, number and type of exercises, use of weights, workout tempo, rest intervals, and psycho-physical state.
- Lack of clear goals. Why are we training? To lose weight? To feel better? To get stronger? Or just to check off an activity?
- Inconsistency with the chosen program. Changing a fitness program after just 2–4 sessions because it "doesn't seem effective" is discouraged. Real effectiveness comes after at least 7–10 sessions.
- Overdoing it with exercises, session duration, or complexity. A progressive approach, respecting the key training factors (volume, complexity, intensity), is the true key to success.
- Improper rest intervals between exercises. Avoid long and/or frequent breaks, but also overly short ones. Breaks should be consistent — between 40 seconds and 1 minute, following recommended standards.
- Obsessing over personal records. Doing more reps, lifting heavier weights, or adding too many exercises too soon is not the answer. Consistency in training, especially for beginners, remains the key to progress.

- Extending training sessions unnecessarily. Neither excessive session length nor overtraining frequency will improve maintenance fitness. Stick to the recommended constants!
- Neglecting muscle group balance. Avoid focusing only on favorite exercises. All major muscle groups must be trained consistently and alternatively.
- Training at irregular intervals. One session today, another next week, and then a long pause... again, we emphasize: consistency is the key to success.
- Skipping recovery methods. Include recovery activities such as swimming, music therapy, outdoor walks, and social interaction between training sessions.

CONCLUSIONS

Fitness offers a highly convenient alternative for developing acceptable psycho-physical fitness levels for all age groups and professional categories, whether practiced individually or under qualified supervision.

To summarize the key points from the above discussion:

- All fitness-related activities should align with and promote a sense of well-being for the individual.
- For individuals over 50 years of age, it is recommended to undergo a thorough medical check-up before starting any demanding activity.
- High performance or competitive goals should be avoided in both young children and seniors—fitness is not meant to be a competitive sport.
- Flexibility and mobility exercises should be approached with moderation at older ages, considering physiological changes and individual capacities.
- Physical activity, no matter how structured, will have little or no effect if proper rest, nutrition, training factors, and psycho-physical needs are not addressed.
- In the event of injury, do not force the body through pain to complete exercises. Focus on full recovery first, then gradually resume movement.
- Under no circumstances should there be excessive increases in training volume or intensity when pursuing psycho-physical fitness goals.

Finally, a consistent approach to training remains the foundation for success in any fitness journey.

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