36 HOURS TO SPARTA

PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSON PLANS

36 Hours to Sparta

Documentary Lesson Plans for Physical Education Teachers

Introduction

Chronic diseases (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, osteoporosis etc.), which are a major cause of death in Western societies, are directly linked to the changes that have occurred in the modern human lifestyle in recent decades. Research has shown that health-related behaviours have their roots in childhood and are significantly influenced by family, friends, teachers, school and the mass media.
It is, therefore, imperative to try to influence children and youth in school, in order to help change their daily behaviours and health. For this reason, the educational programme accompanying the documentary "36 Hours to Sparta" aims to encourage children and young people to discover the value of sport, changing their attitudes, perceptions and behaviour.
The **objectives** of the project are:

- to help students develop skills that allow them to organize their free time and make choices that protect their own mental and physical health.
- to increase student participation in physical activities (walking, running, cycling, swimming, dancing etc.) .
- to improve self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Programme Overview

Number of Lesson Plans: 5

Duration: 1-2 school hours for each lesson plan

Advice for the implementation of proposed activities

- The lesson plans are aimed at high school students but can also be adapted for the last two years of primary school.
- With the exception of the film screening and discussion, the other plans can be implemented in whatever order the teacher wishes.
- Additional information provided is optional.

Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan 1 "36 Hours to Sparta" Film Screening and Discussion

Lesson Plan 2 Cardiorespiratory Fitness and Health

Lesson Plan 3 Make your own Training Plan!

Lesson Plan 4 Nutrition and Sport

Lesson Plan 5 Physical Education for the Disabled

Background information for the teacher

"36 Hours to Sparta" is a 26-minute version of the feature-length documentary film **Ultra: The Real Marathon**, which tells the story of five people across Europe, who have dedicated their lives to completing the Spartathlon Ultra- Distance Race. We follow them through a whole year of preparation, as they confront extreme hardship and surpass the limits of their body and mind.

The Spartathlon

The Spartathlon Ultra-Distance Race retraces the footsteps of Pheidippides, an Ancient Greek long-distance runner from Athens, who was sent by the Athenians as an envoy to Sparta, to seek help in their fight against the Persians, in 490 B.C.E. The Battle of Marathon, which followed, was one of the most famous Greek victories against the Persians. About 10,000 Greeks, most of them from Athens, fought an army of 20,000 Persians led by King Darius. The Greeks surprised their enemies by charging downhill straight at the Persians.

In the 6th Book of his Histories, the Ancient Greek historian Herodotus mentions that before going to battle, the Athenian generals sent a long-distance runner (a so-called "hemerodromus" or "day-runner") as envoy to Sparta, to inform the Spartans of the Persian threat and seek their help. The runner covered the 240km distance in less than two days and, following the Spartans' refusal to help, returned to Athens to take part in the Battle of Marathon. This seems to be a more-or-less true story, both because it's mentioned by Herodotus and because its protagonist was a "hemerodromus", a long-distance runner, which is known to have existed as a professional activity in antiquity.

This incident seems to have inspired John Foden, a British Group Captain of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and long-distance runner himself, who in the early 1980s decided, together with four of his colleagues, to run the distance from Athens to Sparta, as described by Herodotus; their aim was to discover whether modern humans could manage to reach Sparta from Athens in less than two days. Having covered the distance in 36 hours, Foden conceived the idea of establishing an Ultra-Marathon Race. It was thus that in September 1983, the first International Spartathlon Ultra-Distance Race took place. Ever since then, runners from all over the world gather in Athens once a year, to take part in the Spartathlon Race, retracing the footsteps of the legendary Pheidippides.

Brief analysis of the psychological state of the film's protagonists

During the race, the film's protagonists experience alternating emotions of fear, agony, euphoria, indignation, psychological near collapse, frustration and satisfaction. Joy alternates with delirium and tears of sadness, which turn into tears of redemption and happiness! Where fatigue and exhaustion seem to drain the body, self-belief becomes stronger, together with passion and determination. This is the power of the will, the magic that lies hidden in the human soul! Actually, this is life! In any case, it's so beautiful to see someone strive for their dream to come true, full of passion and belief in themselves. Both Balázs and the rest of the protagonists demonstrate, through their efforts, the tremendous value and unique beauty of sport. Even those who do not manage to reach the finishing line earn our respect for their efforts.

Benefits of sport

Systematic exercise and engagement in physical activities (walking, cycling, swimming etc.) have a significant impact on our lives. Hippocrates, who wrote two books on regimen diets, noted that "eating alone does not keep a man well, he must also take exercise; for food and exercise work together to produce health." The Roman doctor Galen summed up the benefits of exercise: «Medicine and bodily exercise are branches of one and the same science; the science of health."

In fact, sport improves our self-esteem and shapes our personality, in addition to its other benefits, such as having good health, a beautiful body etc.

LESSON PLAN 1

"36 Hours to Sparta" Film Screening and Discussion

Objective: To help students participate in a discussion about the benefits of exercise but also express their feelings in relation to the film and their personal experiences.

Step 1: Film Screening (26 minutes)

Step 2: Discussion

Suggested questions:

- How many of you have heard of the Spartathlon? What is it? Why do so few athletes complete the race?
- Which do you believe are the basic differences between the Spartathalon and other races?
- Which stories touched you most and why?
- What are your feelings about each protagonist?
- What do you think are the psychological benefits of exercise for the film's characters?
- Are the protagonists similar in any way? Why does each athlete compete in the Spartathlon?
- Do you know examples of people who changed their lives through sport? If not, refer to films.
- In connection to the previous question, discuss 'sports films' such as *Hoop Dreams* (1994), *Bend It Like Beckham*' (2002), *Chariots of Fire* (1981).

Step 3: Game

In two minutes, find a classmate who does sport and present his/her positive experience to the rest of the class.

Step 4: Group activity

Divide the class into small groups. Each group makes a list of the physical and psychological benefits of sport and presents the list to the rest of the class.

Materials: a table or large pieces of paper.

Physical Benefits	Psychological Benefits

LESSON PLAN 2

Cardiorespiratory Fitness and Health

Objectives

- to understand the importance of cardiorespiratory endurance (the ability of the body to exercise for a prolonged period of time)
- to learn to calculate the ideal exercise length, in order to be able to exercise on their own
- to learn how to carry out endurance tests

Step 1: Introductory Activity - Group Discussion

- What is aerobic exercise and fitness?
- Which activities are aerobic?
- Which sports require aerobic capacity and endurance?

For the teacher:

The Spartathlon and Marathon are races in which an athlete's performance improves by increasing cardiorespiratory endurance. Cardiorespiratory endurance or aerobic capacity is the ability of the human body to use oxygen to produce energy for an extended period of time. Each form of exercise which requires the use of muscle strength at a low intensity for an extended period of time strengthens the cardiovascular system and improves endurance. Such forms of "aerobic" exercise are swimming, walking, running, cycling, rope exercises etc.

Health Impact of Aerobic Exercise

- Reduction of body fat percentage due to calorie consumption, smaller chance of obesity.
- Regular aerobic exercise increases the levels of "good" cholesterol (HDL), regulates blood glucose levels and reduces blood pressure. These adjustments greatly reduce the chances of developing dyslipidemias, diabetes or hypertension.
- People who do not exercise are twice as likely to experience heart disease compared to those who exercise. Aerobic exercise improves the circulation, strengthens the heart and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Regular exercise increases life expectancy.

Step 2: Calculate the ideal exercise zone

Suggested questions:

- Do you know how much aerobic exercise is needed in order to benefit one's health?
- How can one know if he/she is exercising at the right intensity?

For the teacher:

Aerobic exercise can have a significant effect on the heart and lungs when it is done with the appropriate intensity for at least 30 minutes at a time, 3-4 times a week. For best results, a teen should exercise at the appropriate intensity 5 days a week, for at least 60 minutes each time.

In order to calculate the ideal exercise intensity, one must learn to measure his/her pulse.

How do we find the ideal exercise target zone?

- One way to discover your ideal exercise intensity is to see how hard your heart is beating during physical activity. To use this method, you first have to figure out your maximum heart rate – the upper limit of what your cardiovascular system can handle during physical activity.
- First you calculate your resting heart rate (RHR) by counting your heart beats per minute. A few minutes before going to bed in the evening, lie down in bed and relax for 2-3 minutes. Gently place your index and middle fingers on the inside surface of your wrist, or on the side of your neck just below the jaw. Measure your pulse for 15 seconds and multiply the result by 4, e.g. 19 beats x 4 = 76 (If you are measuring it for the first time, you might want to count for one minute).
- Then calculate your maximum heart rate (MHR), by subtracting your age in years from 220 (e.g. 220-14 = 206).
- Then calculate your heart rate reserve (HRR) by subtracting your resting heart rate (RHR) from your maximum heart rate (e.g. 206-76 = 130 beats. This is your heart rate reserve. 60% of this number is 78 beats. 85% of this number is 110 beats. By adding each of these two numbers to the resting heart rate, we find the minimum and maximum fluctuation of our heart rate during aerobic exercise:
    - Minimum: 76 + 78 = 154 beats per min.
    - Maximum: 76 + 110 = 186 beats per min.

These values define the ideal exercise zone for each individual, which means that when this person is exercising aerobically, his/her heartbeat should range from 154 to 186 beats per minute. Try counting your pulse and compare the results with those of your classmates.

Step 3: Assessing cardiorespiratory endurance

You can estimate your level of endurance with simple tests that are easy to perform in the schoolyard or the gym. Examples of fitness tests:

1. Step test

2. 1600m test

3. 20m shuttle run test

Try some of the above tests with your classmates, in the classroom or in the schoolyard, with the help of your sports teacher. Good luck!!!

Instructions for these tests can be found on the following sites:

https://www.brianmac.co.uk/havard.htm

http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness_articles.asp?id=1115

http://www.topendsports.com/testing/children.htm

Good Luck!

LESSON PLAN 3

Make your own Training Plan!

Objectives:

- to help students organize their free time constructively
- to encourage participation in physical activities (walking, running, cycling, swimming, dancing etc.) according to the students' preferences, abilities and endurance limits.
- Improve self-esteem and self-efficacy, by defining and achieving personal goals.

Step 1: Make your own exercise programme

Use the table below to build your individual exercise programme

ACTIVITY	DURATION	HOW MANY TIMES PER WEEK	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	4th WEEK	TOTAL PER MONTH
1. Running	3 kilometres	3 times/week	3 times/week	3 times/week	2 times/week	2 times/week	10 times
2							
3							
4							
5							

Instructions for drawing up your personal plan:

- In the first column, note which activities you want to begin, starting tomorrow (e.g. skipping, jogging, bike etc).
- In the second column, note the duration of exercise (e.g. 15 minutes per day), or the distance you will cover (e.g. 3km run). In the third column, note how many times a week (e.g. 3 times/week). In the following columns, note what you actually did last week compared to your goal. In the last column, sum up all the workouts of the month. At the end of the month, note whether you are satisfied with the result or not. If not, plan better your target for next month.

IMPORTANT: Targets should be written weekly. Otherwise they are forgotten and not implemented.

TIP # 1: When you exercise alone, with your friends or your family, you should remember to:

- Warm up with appropriate exercises.
- Gradually increase the intensity and duration of the exercise.
- Do more relaxed exercises at the end of the routine (e.g. stretching or relaxed running).

TIP # 2: You can use online applications for increasing physical activity (Google Fit, Runtastic, Endomondo etc., available on a computer, mobile or tablet). With their help you can:

- Set goals for physical fitness.
- Keep track of your progress and write down the type of activities you perform daily and their duration.
- Compare your activity over time to see how much you've improved.

LESSON PLAN 4

Nutrition and Sport

Objectives:

- to help students understand the role and importance of nutrition in health and sport
- to get to know the five food groups
- to become familiar with the concept of a balanced nutrition and the nutritional pyramid.
- to work together to promote healthy eating.
- to discuss healthy eating

Step 1:

Discussion about food and energy

For the teacher:

Refer to the scenes in the film "36 Hours for Sparta", which show the food eaten by the runners during the race, to start a discussion about the importance of nutrition. The discussion can begin with the extremely simple question:

- Why do we eat? Food gives us energy to live, run, play, practice, just as cars need fuel to move. Athletes have additional reasons for choosing healthy foods. They need the right food to give them extra energy for training and competing in races.

The teacher then explains that healthy nutrition is needed in order to maintain an adolescent's health, as the nutritional needs of the body at that age are particularly great due to its rapid growth. The changes seen in teenagers include weight and height gain but also increases in bone mass and density. In fact, adolescents gain about 20% of their adult height and 50% of their adult weight in their teens. The type of food that both athletes and ordinary teens need is the same:

Energy	The driving force comes from **carbohydrates**.
Growth	**Proteins** play a key role in bone development.
Catalysts	**Vitamins** don't produce energy but are necessary for maintaining the body's functions.
Strength	**Iron** contributes to the good functioning of the circulatory system.

Fill in the foods you think are rich in:

Carbohydrates	**Proteins**	**Vitamins**	**Iron**

Step 2: A balanced diet

For the teacher:

Proper diet choices are important for healthy bodies and healthy minds. The term **balanced diet** refers to a range of parameters, including the variety of foods consumed (food consumption from all food groups and

different foods within each group), the frequency of eating, the appropriate number of meals during the day, quality (the selection of the most nutritious foods from each group), but also the design of balanced meals, the quantity (size of the portion consumed) and finally the conditions, namely the proper atmosphere for meals.

This section should include a presentation made by the teacher on:

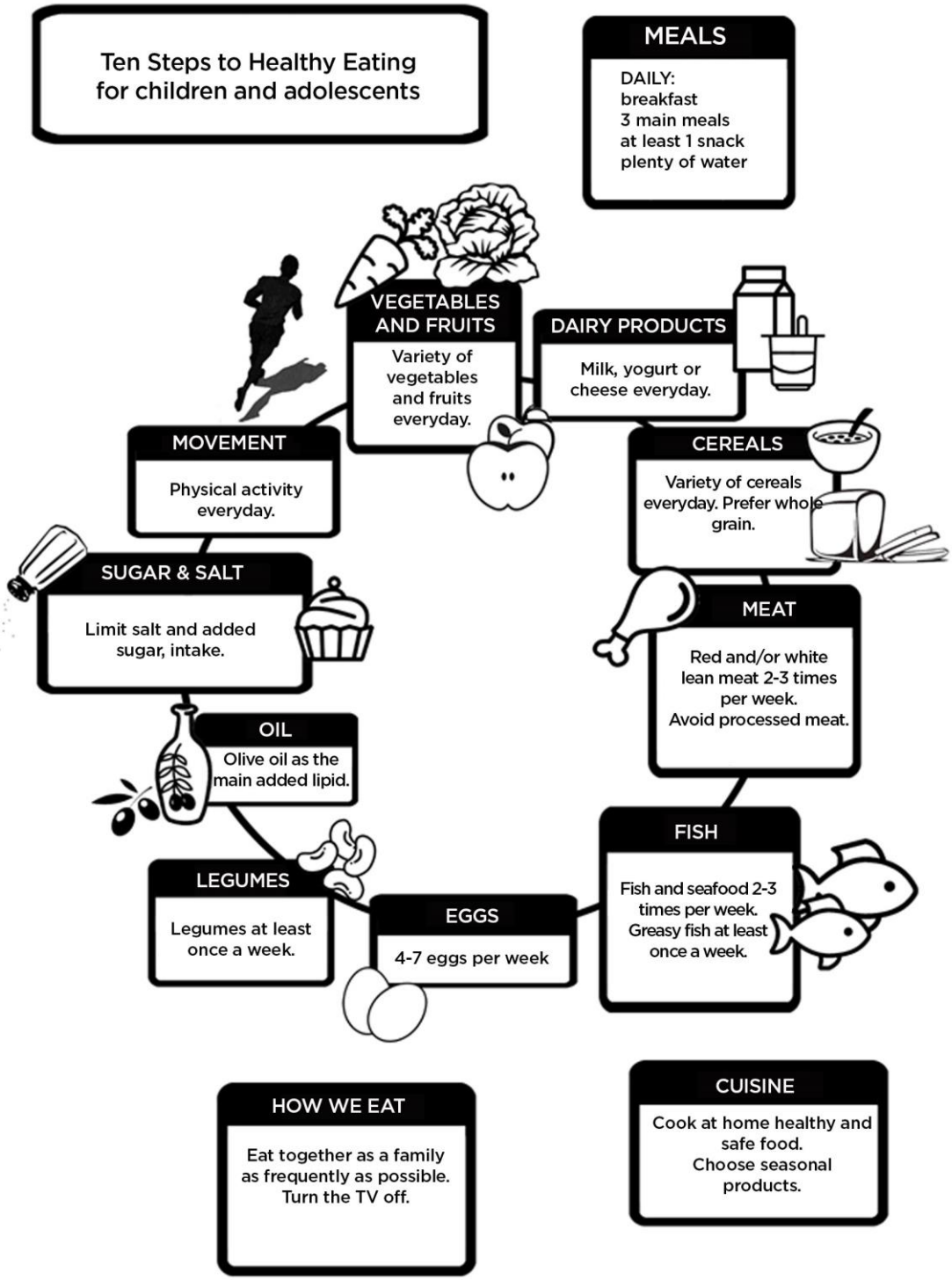
- the five food groups
- the food pyramid
- a balanced diet

Further information on dietary guidelines for adults, infants, children and adolescents and be found in:

- National guidelines Greece http://www.diatrofikoiodigoi.gr/?Page=english-menu
- National guidelines UK http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/united-kingdom/en/
- http://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=school-aged-child-nutrition--90-P02280

Suggested activities

- Create posters, artwork and messages about healthy behaviour and put them up in the common areas of the school.
- Draw up a questionnaire about pupils' eating habits, school canteen consumption etc.
- Make a visit to the school canteen and interview the manager.
- Plan, organize and prepare:
    - breakfast at school
    - a midday snack
    - some fresh juice after sports activities
- Introduce a fruit-eating day.
- Organize an event at school, in cooperation with parents, local bodies and experts, which can include a talk on nutrition and a presentation of the results of the questionnaires.



Source: National Dietary Guidelines for infants, children and adolescents. Study and implementation - Institute of Preventive Medicine Environmental and Occupational Health. Prolepsis
Material Available: http://www.diatrofikoiodigoi.gr/?Page=summary-children

LESSON PLAN 5 Physical Activity for the Disabled

OBJECTIVES:

- to inform students about the Paralympic Games and learn about Paralympic sports
- to understand the value of effort and the right to sports for the disabled
- to become familiar with issues relating to disability
- to develop empathy and realize that people with disabilities can participate and play a role in sports with high technical and physical requirements

Step 1:
Distribute and read *Man in Motion Tour*, by Rick Hansen**.**

From 1985 to 1987, Hansen travelled across the world in a wheelchair. In fact, Hansen's journey began 12 years earlier, in 1973, when, at the age of 15, he sustained a spinal cord injury and became a paraplegic due to a car accident.
Hansen had been an active athlete. When he learned he could not move, he prepared for new challenges. He became the first person with disabilities at the University of Canada, British Columbia, to receive a Physical Education degree. He played volleyball and basketball tournaments from his wheelchair and participated in 19 marathons. Hansen's goal, however, was to cross the world in his wheelchair and thus raise money for wheelchair sports and for research on spinal cord injuries. He also wanted to change popular perceptions of disabled athletes. During his trip, Hansen crossed thirty-four countries and four different continents. He climbed five mountains, traveled through floods and experienced incredible highs and lows of temperature. He had a flat tire about a hundred times and was robbed four times. There were also some wonderful moments during all of this, and for many people he became a hero. Children ran beside him and gave him flowers. He managed to convince people across the world that people in a wheelchair can do many things, including sport. Wheelchair racing, for example, has been an Olympic sport since 1992.

Learn more about how to teach your students the importance of accessibility here:
https://www.rickhansen.com/Our-Work/School-Program/Educational-Materials

Source: Book "Become a Champion of Life", International Olympic and Athletic Education Foundation (2004), p. 75.

Step 3: Understanding and discussing

- What feelings did the above stories create in you?
- Rick Hansen proves that disabled people are like all people. They can participate in sports and physical activities in their own unique way. What are the obstacles that usually prevent these people from participating in physical activities?
- If a friend, acquaintance or relative have experienced disability, what do you think are the challenges they have faced in everyday life? How could you help them?
- How "friendly" in terms of accessibility is your school and the local community for the disabled? What could you change at school so that people with disabilities have easier access to facilities?

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For the teacher:

Adapted Physical Education (APE) is a carefully designed physical education instructional programme for students with disability. The goal of APE is to involve all pupils in the Physical Education course, without exception. Like children with normal development, children with disabilities need social acceptance and respect for what they can do, not for what they cannot. The ultimate goal of the programme, in parallel to

the improvement of physical/motor skills, is to achieve the educational and social integration of students with disabilities in the classroom.

Step 4: Learn more about Paralympic Sports

- Create teams in class and research information about Paralympic sports: Boccia, Goalball, Weightlifting and Rugby with a wheelchair. Present them to class.
- With the help of your Physical Education Teacher, try to play some Paralympic Sports! You can, for example, try to run blindfolded, with the help of a companion; or even put a basketball in a plastic bag and play golf. Finally, by placing a volleyball net or a simple rope at a low height, feel the experience of seated athletes playing volleyball.
- Invite a disabled athlete to your school and interview him/her in class. Ideally, combine the invitation with a Paralympic Sports show, in cooperation with your municipality, a club that does sports for disabled people or the National Athletic Federation of People with Disabilities.

For the teacher:

The first Paralympic races took place in Rome in 1960. Since then, they have been held once every four years and are the top sporting event for disabled athletes. Starting from the Seoul Paralympic Games (1988), the Paralympic Games are held in the same city and use the same facilities as the Olympic Games. Today, the Paralympic Games include 22 sports: 18 of these are the same as in the Olympic Games and 4 are exclusive to the Paralympic Games (Boccia, Goalball, Para-Powerlifting and Wheelchair Rugby). Paralympic Games records can be compared to the Olympic athletes' records (e.g. in the 100m race) and in some cases, such as para-powerlifting, the Paralympic record exceeds those of non-disabled athletes.

The slogan "Spirit in Motion," adopted by the Paralympic Movement during the Athens Olympics in 2004, shows that beyond mental and physical ability, what characterizes human existence is the spirit and the willingness of every person to become better.

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