

# Strive for a New Level of Personal Fitness

Regardless of your current level of personal fitness, in the 12 weeks it will take you to complete the athletic requirement badge, you will be in better shape, feel better about yourself, have more energy, and gain self-confidence in your overall fitness.

Fitness is the capacity to achieve the best quality of life possible. Personal fitness is your individual effort and desire to be fit, you are healthy.

To reach your goal, think about how your body works in various situations and about the things that affect your quality of life. Personal fitness is not just physical.

There are many different elements that make up personal fitness. These elements involve your:

??Mind-mental willpower and alertness, emotional balance, and social skills

??Body-physical health, nutrition, and athletic fitness

??Spirit-faith, core values, how you take care of yourself and reach out to help others

It is important to strengthen each element of your personal fitness because each element affects the total personal fitness development and well-being.

All elements of personal fitness work together, interacting and influencing one another. If you are strong in body but weak in mind, your personal fitness will drop. Just as a high level of fitness in one area will boost another area, a low level of fitness in one area will hinder your accomplishments in the other elements.

Think of a bridge your troop lashes together with ropes. How strong would that bridge be if some of the poles or board knots were loose? The bridge would only be as strong as its weakest lashing or rotted post. If we replace the rotted boards with new lashings, the bridge will be much stronger. Think of your personal fitness in the same way. By replacing bad habits with good habits, our overall health in simple but surefire ways, our quality of life can dramatically improve, putting us on better footing in every aspect of life.

## Rate Your Own Personal Fitness

You will need to rate yourself as far as your personal fitness. Objectively rating one's social, mental, emotional, and spiritual status is a challenge. As you work on your personal fitness badge, you will learn to evaluate your physical fitness level and begin an exercise program that you can use for the rest of your life. Your level of personal fitness. You may go from day to day taking part in activities without appreciating the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Don't let this be granted!

Having a healthy level of fitness means that your body is in such good condition that you feel energetic and look healthy. It also means you have the strength and endurance to enjoy yourself. And this is the very best time, during your preteen and teen years, to set a lifestyle pattern that will last a lifetime.

For example, your personal fitness program must be well-balanced. If you eat properly but do not exercise regularly, you will not be able to enjoy your activities. Likewise, if you exercise regularly but do not eat well, you may be much more easily tired out and get sick more often. If you go to camp but do not prepare a nourishing meal or sleep enough hours that night, you will probably be dragging behind on the next day.

If you become as fit as you can be, your confidence in yourself will grow because you will know that you are making the best possible choices. Your characteristics and makeup. Fill your days with study, sports, and family, troop, or other social activities. Do not fritter away your time. If you exercise, eat balanced meals, and get enough sleep, you will discover that you have boundless energy to carry you through day-to-day life. Don't let that arise.

Being personally fit can also help you fulfill the responsibilities of being a Scout. A Scout is cheerful, strong, mentally awake, helpful, and confident. Think about it. It is hard to be prepared for any situation without an excellent level of personal fitness. And having a high level of personal fitness will help you be kind, courteous, and helpful.

# Social, Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual Health

Living the Scout Oath and Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan helps every Scout live a healthy life. What would you be if you were not trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent? In order to try to show those personal qualities every day, in all situations, and with everyone you meet. By taking the Scout Oath and Law and to help others at all times. The Scout who is recognized as a Scout by his actions rather than by a uniform has a social fitness. You know now that living the Scout Law affects your social fitness. To understand why, think what each point of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your *Boy Scout Handbook* or at the back of this pamphlet.

## Social Skills

Think about the characteristics you value in a good friend. Your friends value some of the same characteristics in you. Friends share their emotions with trust and confidence. Everyone needs someone to talk to about his or her feelings, emotions, and problems. Friends have fun with. Friends help one another through bad and good times and are able to speak honestly to one another.

Good communication requires two people—a talker and a listener. These are not skills that come naturally; they need to be learned. When you express your feelings and emotions, it is important to express them appropriately. When you listen, do so with sincerity and care. Friends help one another with problems. By sharing your own feelings and emotions, you allow others to become involved with your life. And by being a good listener, you help others to confront problems, emotions, and struggles in their lives. Being a good listener is just part of being a good friend. Friends help one another to your social health as well as to theirs. Everyone, including you, has the need to be accepted. You do not need to apologize to be accepted. You can accept him or her as an individual. Friends do not judge each other but accept each other unconditionally.

## Peer Pressure

Dealing with peer pressure is tough. You will not always be fortunate enough to have acquaintances who are positive influences. You have the same values and standards that you have. You can accept these people as individuals without doing what they do. You do not allow people to tease you or push you to join activities that make you uncomfortable or that are unlawful. For example, you do not go swimming in a dangerous rock quarry where swimming is not allowed. You could do one of two things. You could refuse to go or offer another activity that is more appropriate, such as going to the public swimming pool. By walking away, you show your friends that you do not accept their behavior. But by offering an alternative, you are providing positive leadership. If your friends do not accept your alternative, you do not let them. Your suggestion, chances are that everyone will have just as much fun at the pool and will be much safer.

Always try to help others raise their own standards and do the right thing. Do not stand back and watch your friends make mistakes. You do not feel as if you are all alone at times when facing peer pressure. But rest assured that staying true to your values as a Scout will have a positive impression on others. Some young people suffer from low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and insecurity. Some kids are always expecting perfection. They may try to be like someone else because that person seems to attract friends. This may lead to not achieving their potential. You do not need to choose drugs, smoking, or harmful behavior. If you know you are taking responsibility, taking pride in your accomplishments, living the Scout Oath and Law, and participating in healthy activities, then you probably feel good about yourself and what you are doing. Although peer acceptance is important, your sense of identity ultimately comes from within.

## **Emotional Fitness**

Your emotional well-being is closely tied to the other components of personal fitness. Your activities, exercise, diet, sleep, social involvement, and physical health all affect your emotional and mental fitness. Everyone worries a little.

It is normal to have some temporary anxiety or depression while overcoming major transitions or obstacles in life. But if these feelings persist and interfere with school, family, friendships, and a healthy social life, you should seek professional help.

Many emotional problems can be prevented in the home.

A good family life is essential to a healthy mind and body. Not every family is the same. Some Scouts have parents who are single, and some boys can have a happy home life with a single parent or guardian. As a family member, your contributions are important. Support family efforts for a peaceful and meaningful home life. Just as your parents help you overcome your problems, you can help solve family problems.

Help plan family outings and activities. Spend quality time with your brothers, sisters, and parents. "Quality time" means time spent in shared and joint activity. If you talk about common interests, work together on a family project, plan for a special occasion, share your thoughts, or play together, you are getting and giving healthy benefits through your family activity. Your family can be our strength.

Earlier you learned that being a good communicator means being able to express your emotions and feelings to a good friend, your parent, your Scoutmaster, a brother or sister, another Scout, or your religious leader. Of course, you must be aware of your feelings and able to express them. Examining your feelings is the first step. For example, if you have ever been in a situation like the one described previously, how did you feel? Be honest. Were you disappointed in your friends? Ashamed? Angry? Your feelings are as such. When you talk to your friend, say, "I felt angry when they asked me to go with them. They know we should not be angry."

It is healthy to admit your feelings, but remember that they are *your* feelings. No one made you feel that way.

## **Spiritual Fitness**

The Boy Scouts of America is an integral part of nearly every place of worship. This is because every Scout has a duty to God, and a religious group provides Scouts the opportunity to recognize and fulfill their duty. Involvement in your religious group helps you understand your duty to God. You are expected to recognize your duty to God, and the religious principles you learn will enable you to live by the Scout Oath and Law.

Religions around the world use Scouting as a way to provide meaningful activities for young men. Most of them have symbols that represent their faith. Some people who recognize and fulfill their duty to God. Some of these emblems are the Ad Altare Dei, Alpha Omega, God's Gift to the World, and On My Honor. Check with your religious leaders to find out the requirements for receiving the emblem. These emblems are not required for advancement but are honorable to wear on your uniform and demonstrate your dedication to your faith.