

As a young person, I believe Physical Activity plays a very important role in our lives and is significant for a number of reasons. This essay sets out to explore some of these reasons and also looks at the variety of roles physical activity may play.

For the purpose of this essay physical activity is defined as “any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health.” (www.wikipedia.com)

The main benefits of participating in physical activity for young people include: healthy musculoskeletal tissues (i.e. bones, muscles and joints);

- healthy cardiovascular system (i.e. heart and lungs);
- neuromuscular awareness (i.e. coordination and movement control); and
- It also facilitates maintenance of a healthy body weight. Therefore, it could be concluded that one of the main roles physical activity plays in young people’s lives is strongly linked to health benefits.

In our class discussion, I realised that students also participate because they like to be social, have fun, release stress and compete in organised sport. However, health reasons kept coming up as some of the most important motivators. I can relate to most of the reasons we discussed in class but I do believe when we look at the role of physical activity and health as a whole it makes better sense to consider this in terms of Hauora and wellbeing rather than just 'physical' fitness. Hauora takes into account four dimensions of wellbeing and physical activity can play a role in each one. Therefore, having fun and hanging out with friends can all still be important aspects of our health...

...Physical activity must be a significant part of most young people’s lives because more people choose to play sport and be active than don’t. For example, SPARC states that in 2001 66% of young people were active. This means those young people are spending at least 60 minutes per day exercising. If physical activity was not significant to them, they would not bother devoting as much time to it and would probably spend even more time watching tv or sitting around with their friends or something. Personally, I love being active and I worked out that I can spend up to 10 hours a week doing some sort of physical activity even if it is just walking to school.

Physical activity must also be significant to young people because we spend so much money on it. This can include paying for things like sports fees, uniforms, shoes and trip costs. I don’t think you have to be rich to be physically active because you could just choose to do your own thing like running or walking if you couldn’t afford sports fees.

I believe our Year 12 programme generally suits the needs of the students in our class. We have all chosen to take PE as an option, therefore it is obvious we understand the health benefits of being physically active. If any improvements were to be made I would suggest that we could include more fitness testing to help motivate us to work out more throughout the year. I would also enjoy working out how my results compare to my classmates and this would definitely motivate me.