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Web Site Review: The President's Challenge

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The President's Challenge. President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, 2003. From The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Web site www.presidentschallenge.org

The President's Challenge is a program that encourages all Americans to make being active part of their everyday lives. No matter what your activity and fitness level, The President's Challenge can help motivate you to improve.

For anyone who has ever attempted an exercise program, it does not take long before the motivation begins to dwindle, making it more and more difficult to continue the program. The President's Challenge Web site confronts the motivational factor by offering rewards to people who meet their daily activity goal of 30 minutes per day for adults and 60 minutes per day for children younger than 18 for at least 5 days per week for a total of 6 weeks.

The primary focus of The President's Challenge Web site is to get people of all ages excited about physical activity. Goal setting and earning rewards for reaching those goals are promoted. Participants have 8 weeks to complete the program and are able to download or complete on-line activity logs to help them track their performance. A body mass index calculator and helpful ideas to assist people to become more active are included in an attempt to motivate and encourage participants.

In general, the Web site is very enjoyable and easy to navigate through the placement of the index as a sidebar and at the bottom of each page. Very little scrolling is required, and there are no distracting blinking images that could lessen the educational purpose of the Web site. A consistent appearance is sustained throughout the site through the use of black and white professional graphics portraying physical activity as enjoyable and exciting. Although the benefits of physical activity and the negative consequences of inactivity are not noted, the overall effects of the graphics and motivational messages leave the viewer feeling as if the goal of engaging in physical activity 30 to 60 minutes a day is very obtainable.

Although designed mostly for adolescent or adult use, the Web site includes sections for almost every age, from children through seniors. Each section begins with an appropriate captivating phrase for the target age group and a list of activities that pertain directly to that group. Educators are offered a page through which they can download a free tool, called Fitness File, which is designed to coordinate and track student's records and fitness tests.

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports program, which was once available only to students in physical education courses, is now available to all ages through this Web site. Caregivers in daycare centers, fitness trainers, and health care providers can promote and use the site. The tracking program available can serve as a great motivator. In a time when obesity is on the rise, The President's Challenge Web site offers an alternative to get Americans moving, thus helping to combat the increasing obesity rates.

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