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Changes in Health-Related Fitness of College Females During a One-Semester Activity Course

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Young adulthood is a prime time to establish healthy physical activity behaviors. Female physical activity is low, and chronic diseases due to the lack of exercise are evident among women in college. College physical activity courses offer opportunities for students to learn how to exercise to make a positive impact on health-related fitness. **PURPOSE:** To evaluate baseline and follow-up health-related fitness outcomes among female college students as seen through their participation in a semester-long, tri-weekly activity course. **METHODS:** 10 women enrolled in a physical activity course participated in a pilot study evaluating changes in health-related fitness. Participants underwent assessments that included resting heart rate, body mass index, push-ups, and sit-and-reach. Baseline data were collected at the beginning of the semester and follow-up data were collected six weeks later. A paired t-test was used to evaluate changes in resting heart rate, body mass index, number of push-ups, and flexibility. **RESULTS:** Resting heart rate ($87.0 \text{ bpm} \pm 9.4$ vs. $82.8 \text{ bpm} \pm 7.4$, $p > .05$), number of push-ups (12.6 ± 7.4 vs. 17.3 ± 8.5 , $p > .05$), and flexibility ($41.3 \text{ cm} \pm 5.2$ vs. $43.4 \text{ cm} \pm 4.5$, $p > .05$) improved, but were not significant. Although body mass index increased ($21.5 \text{ kg/m}^2 \pm 2.9$ vs. $21.8 \text{ kg/m}^2 \pm 2.5$, $p > .05$), it was also non-significant. **CONCLUSION:** The results of this study illustrate small improvements in health-related fitness, however, differences were non-significant. Participation in an organized, semester-long activity course three days a week may improve certain aspects of health-related fitness in college females, but further investigation on the quality of activities is needed to determine course effectiveness in improving student fitness.