

# NATURE-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

IN PE

Many lifetime physical activities occur outside and in nature including cycling, trail running, kayaking, skiing, etc. How might PE programming better support youth during formal schooling to become lifelong movers with nature in mind?

## Definition

Nature-based physical activities (NBPA) are physical activities performed in natural environments that require little to no equipment, can be participated in by the majority of students, are cost-efficient, & can be implemented by PE teachers frequently throughout the school year (Gruno & Gibbons, 2021). These activities strengthen the connection between students & the place where they live (Aucoin, 2011). These nature-based physical activities are done in green areas on or near school grounds within the timeframe of one PE lesson (Gruno & Gibbons, 2020).

## What it is not

They are not outdoor education programmes. Outdoor Ed programming often includes overnight adventures while NBPA are "microadventures" (Gruno & Gibbons, 2020) that take place at or close to school. NBPA are often more accessible for the whole student population.

## Activities

- ✓ Disc golf
- ✓ Gardening
- ✓ Bird watching
- ✓ Hiking
- ✓ Forest games
- ✓ Geocaching
- ✓ Orienteering
- ✓ Scavenger hunts
- ✓ Survival skills
- ✓ Indigenous games
- ✓ Conservation activities
- ✓ Running/Jogging
- ✓ Swimming



## Benefits

- ✓ Nature connectedness
- ✓ Promote engagement in physical activities for a lifetime
- ✓ Improve health & wellness
- ✓ Stress reduction
- ✓ Increase time engaged in physical activity
- ✓ Increase in enjoyment
- ✓ Greater intention to participate in future outdoor exercise
- ✓ Opportunities for social interaction & greater positive interactions amongst peers
- ✓ Increase self-confidence & attentiveness
- ✓ Aligns with cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples

## Tips to Implement in PE

Sedentary & less physically skilled students are more likely to participate in NBPA when tasks are: simple, fun, & socially supportive (Flett et al., 2010).  
 NBPA should:

- take place in a natural area on or near school grounds
- emphasize a connection to nature (e.g. make use of leaves, sticks, rocks, trees)
  - include little or no specialized equipment
  - happen within the timeframe of a regular PE lesson
- be personally relevant & provide students with a connection to place (e.g., physical activities performed connect to local community) (Gruno & Gibbons, 2020)

## Acknowledgements

The visual is based on the work of: Gruno, J., & Gibbons, S.L. (2020). Incorporating nature-based physical activity in physical and health education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 91(3), 26-34.  
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