

# Lecture 4

## Organization and Conduct of Independent Training Sessions

### PLAN

1. Requirements for organizing independent training sessions.
2. Specific features of organizing and conducting extracurricular physical education activities.
3. Control and self-control during independent training sessions.

#### 1. Requirements for Organizing Independent Training Sessions.

Independent physical exercises, sports, and tourism activities should be an essential component of a healthy lifestyle for students. They compensate for the lack of physical activity, contribute to more effective recovery after fatigue, and improve physical and mental performance. Such sessions can be conducted in usual conditions, during free time, using the exercises provided by the instructor.

Independent work significantly complements formal classes and ensures continuity in the physical education process, increasing its effectiveness in influencing students' physical development and preparedness. Independent work includes various targeted individual and group physical culture and sports activities performed by students outside class hours at the university, in the dormitory, or at home, without the instructor's presence but according to their assignment.

The organizer and supervisor of students' independent work must be the physical education instructor. They select sets of exercises for independent sessions, determine elements of sports techniques for self-improvement, and provide organizational and methodological recommendations and advice.

Keeping track of rational methods of independent training makes it possible to create a system of home tasks, develop appropriate skills, and cultivate persistence,

habits, and a strong belief in the need for regular physical exercise. It also enables timely assistance to students in overcoming difficulties and correcting mistakes.

The physical education instructor must use students' interest in their own physical development to form a stable habit of systematic physical activity. The instructor monitors, summarizes, analyzes, and evaluates students' progress over a specific period.

Instilling in students the need for daily physical activity is a challenging task. Its successful implementation requires persistence, creativity, knowledge, and professional skills from the instructor. While the instructor directs students' motor activity during classes, students' own activity—both during classes and in their free time—should continue in the form of independent training aimed at physical self-improvement. This can be achieved through continuous educational influence during classes and training sessions. It is also advisable to use promotion and advocacy of physical culture and sports. Along with mass media (television, radio, newspapers), it is useful to apply informational stands and photo displays that highlight the university's sports life, various sports events, as well as to conduct lectures and discussions.

To properly organize independent training sessions, students must possess specific knowledge and skills provided by the physical education instructor or coach during educational and training classes. These skills and knowledge must be developed systematically and continuously.

Knowledge about the structure of the human body, hygiene, self-control, self-massage, hardening, therapeutic physical culture, and the techniques of sports exercises included in the curriculum facilitates the organization of students' independent training sessions.

Independent training sessions must have an organic connection with the educational and training process at the higher education institution (HEI).

Assignments for independent work should be given with consideration of students' age, sex, individual characteristics, and physical abilities. Such a system must ensure the gradual progression of physical loads, increasing complexity of

tasks, and expanding the student's involvement in independent physical activity from one session to the next.

It is almost impossible for the physical education instructor to assign a specific task to each student and then individually check its completion. Therefore, the training group should be divided into subgroups according to their physical preparedness. The most common criteria for dividing students into groups are: classification into athletes and non-athletes, level of physical fitness, and preference for practicing exercises from certain sports. Such grouping helps the instructor select appropriate tasks for each subgroup.

The instructor must help students plan their activities in accordance with the class schedule at the HEI and explain how to use free time effectively.

The main conditions for organizing independent physical education and sports activities for HEI students include:

- continuous supervision and control by the physical education instructor;
- a clearly developed system of home tasks;
- availability of the required theoretical knowledge and practical skills to complete the assignments;
- an individual approach to designing tasks based on students' real abilities;
- availability of conditions for systematic training;
- adherence by students to a balanced regimen of study, rest, and free time.

Students often explain their increased interest in physical development by certain personal motives—for example: improving health, becoming stronger or more enduring, developing good posture, becoming an athlete, improving their performance, or preparing for competitions.

The physical education instructor, using these student motivations for self-improvement, should encourage them to perform exercises daily. For this, the instructor needs to formulate clear tasks and outline the ways to accomplish them. Clearly defined instructions from the instructor stimulate students to engage regularly in physical exercise.

Important factors that motivate students to engage in independent physical and sports activities include:

- preparation for control standards according to the physical education program;
- preparation for sports festivals and events;
- improving sports mastery and achieving specific athletic results;
- increasing or maintaining the achieved level of physical fitness;
- developing physical qualities with clearly indicated short-term goals;
- strengthening health, hardening the body, improving overall well-being;
- eliminating deficiencies in physical development;
- organizing active recreation and meaningful leisure.

Independent training sessions should contribute to the development of physical qualities, the strengthening of health, the improvement of the body's working capacity, and the formation of skills primarily in the sports included in the physical education curriculum.

## 2. Specific Features of Organizing and Conducting Extracurricular Physical Education Activities

The diverse level of knowledge, health status, physical and athletic preparedness of students, as well as the wide range of their interests, requires the use of various forms of physical exercise, sports, and tourism during extracurricular time. Forms of physical education in higher education institutions are divided into instructional (academic and elective classes) and extracurricular. Extracurricular forms include:

During the working day: morning gymnastics, physical activity breaks, short fitness minutes, micro-breaks, preparatory gymnastics, corrective gymnastics, etc.;

Independent training sessions: group-based (sports sections, general physical fitness groups, health groups, etc.) and individual (active leisure, training during exam periods or holidays, completing instructor-assigned tasks, home exercises);

- Mass activities: sports games and entertainment, walks, excursions, hikes, festivals, discussions, exhibitions, reviews, lectures, contests, competitions, and campus spartakiads;

- Recreation and sports camps.

Tasks of Extracurricular Physical Education Work with Students: promotion of a healthy lifestyle; involving as many students as possible in systematic physical exercise and sports; developing the skills and habits needed to independently use accessible means of physical education in daily life for the purpose of health improvement, physical development, and meaningful, culturally enriching leisure; choosing a sports specialization and achieving results in a selected sport that correspond to the qualification standards; training student leaders and physical activity volunteers within the institution; providing opportunities for active recreation; strengthening health; improving knowledge, skills, abilities, motor, moral, and volitional qualities acquired during mandatory physical education classes, and, on this basis, ensuring better readiness for mastering the state curriculum.

### **Morning Hygienic Gymnastics (MHG)**

Main purpose: to optimize the transition from prolonged rest (sleep) to daily activity. Specialists have recorded an 18–20% higher working capacity in students who regularly perform MHG.

The core of morning hygienic gymnastics is a warm-up aimed not at rapid preparation for a specific activity or sport, but at gradual activation of bodily functions, overcoming post-rest inertia, and entering the day with normal tone and good mood. At the same time, MHG helps accomplish additional tasks such as posture development and maintenance, sustaining previously developed physical qualities, and shaping character.

Duration: 10–15 minutes. The routine typically consists of 7–8 exercises targeting all major muscle groups. Every two weeks, new exercises should be added to the routine.

Heart rate: increases by 50–80% compared to resting level and returns to baseline within 5–15 minutes after completing the session.

One of the methods of designing an exercise routine includes the following sequence:

1. Stretching with full extension of the limbs and trunk, performed either in bed or while standing.
2. Exercises for a gradual transition to a working state that gently activate blood circulation in the major muscle groups of the lower limbs and pelvic area—for example, slow squats or alternating leg extensions using a resistance band.
3. Bends, turns, and twists of the torso accompanied by coordinated arm movements, performed with gradually increasing amplitude and pace.
4. General or regional exercises involving pronounced but submaximal muscular effort, such as push-ups. Strength exercises alternate with flexibility and relaxation exercises.
5. Stretching series, for example, alternating swinging movements of the arms and legs with gradually increasing amplitude up to the maximum.
6. Cyclical exercises that activate respiratory and cardiovascular functions within an aerobic regime – for instance, series of on-the-spot jumps that raise heart rate to 140–150 beats per minute.
7. A calming transitional series, such as walking with decreasing pace and emphasized breathing exercises.

### **Physical Activity Breaks (Physiological Pauses)**

These are intended to prevent fatigue, improve functional state, and maintain work capacity. The routine consists of 4–6 exercises performed at the workplace, lasting 5–7 minutes. Heart rate increases to 110–120 bpm during the routine and returns to baseline by the end.

During an 8-hour workday, up to 5–6 physical breaks and fitness minutes are used – typically every 2–3 hours and again 2 hours before the end of the working day.

For muscles that remained in a static position during work (in students this includes the trunk, legs, shoulders, and pelvis), dynamic loading is prescribed. For muscles performing dynamic work, relaxation exercises are used.

### **Structure of a Fitness Minute Routine for Students**

A fitness-minute routine should include exercises for major muscle groups as well as relaxation and spinal flexibility work. To reduce vascular tone in the brain, exercises involving head rotation and torso turns are used.

A recommended sequence is:

1. Stretching.
2. Exercises for relaxation of the arms, legs, and trunk.
3. Exercises to strengthen the leg muscles.
4. Exercises to increase or maintain spinal mobility.
5. Exercises to improve circulation and respiration.
6. Exercises for the trunk muscles.
7. Exercises for coordination and attention.

Fitness minutes are essentially a shortened physical pause. The routine includes 2–3 exercises and is performed every 1.5–2 hours. A variation is the micro-pause, lasting 20–30 seconds.

### **Independent Training Sessions**

Independent sessions are recommended for students during exam periods and holidays. To support independent activity, students are given access to sports facilities, and the department instructors provide methodological guidance.

As an independent form of activity, home-based training within extended active rest can also be used. For poorly prepared students, additional sessions are organized. Their purpose is to strengthen health, develop physical qualities needed for mastering the curriculum, and prepare for meeting performance standards.

Usually, before the start of classes, a student performs morning hygienic gymnastics, takes a morning walk, and so on. Such forms of activity play a supplementary role: they increase the overall volume of daily physical activity, and in some cases fully meet the student's daily need for movement. Although these

sessions do not solve major training tasks and do not cause significant physiological adaptations, they help accelerate adjustment to specific activities, optimize mental state, and improve work capacity. Moreover, such sessions have strong self-educational value as they require willpower, self-discipline, and persistence. The relatively short duration of these exercises makes them convenient for performing outdoors or in natural settings. Being generally of a general-physical orientation, they may not have distinct preparatory, main, and concluding parts.

Independent physical exercises are the main form of personal organization of physical self-education. They are conducted as group or individual sessions while retaining the structure of instructional formats. In terms of content, they may be single-activity or complex sessions.

Single-activity sessions include one type of physical activity: health-oriented walking, jogging, athletic gymnastics, etc. Their purpose is to maintain work capacity and strengthen students' health. At the same time, they also have a significant training effect, especially for developing endurance, muscular strength, coordination, and flexibility.

Complex sessions include several types of exercises within one training period. For example, general developmental exercises, swimming, and a game such as football. The duration of such sessions depends on the student's physical preparedness and ranges from 35–40 minutes to 2 hours, while retaining all structural features of an instructional class.

Physical exercises performed as part of extended active rest meet the student's need for healthy and enjoyable leisure. These include walking tours, water trips, cycling, sports games using simplified rules, and similar activities. The main task of such sessions is to maintain students' normal physical condition, working capacity, and positive emotional state.

### 3. Control and Self-Control During Independent Training Sessions

Pedagogical control is a system of methods for obtaining information about the level of physical development and the changes occurring in a student's body under the influence of physical exercise.

Pedagogical control may be current (systematic), periodic, and final.

Well-designed forms of control and self-control encourage students to engage in continuous physical self-improvement and serve as a strong motivational factor for regular independent activity. Therefore, checking and evaluating the results of students' independent work – both over a certain period and across the academic year – is very important.

If training sessions are connected with the physical education curriculum, conducting pedagogical control becomes much easier. In this case, standardized forms of assessment already exist: control standards and fitness tests.

The instructor may set deadlines for completing tasks and corresponding dates for passing the required standards. Additional deadlines may also be established – for two weeks, a month, or a semester – depending on the content and individual workload.

Systematic monitoring of task completion can be conducted not only during physical education classes but also during mass sports events.

Assessment of physical readiness should begin with baseline data, after which specific semester-by-semester goals should be planned – indicating how much each student's level of fitness should improve by the end of every semester throughout all years of study at the HEI.

Baseline indicators for students' physical improvement should be the results of specific tests conducted annually at the beginning of the academic year.

For ensuring regular physical education and sports activity, the final session of the academic year is of great importance. Before giving students tasks for the vacation period, the instructor must analyze each student's progress over the year and outline directions for further physical improvement.

Self-control data help the instructor monitor the student's physical condition and regulate their training load appropriately.

The most convenient form of self-monitoring is keeping a diary. Students should record in it all subjective and objective data about the state of their body: well-being, sleep, appetite, mental and physical work capacity, body weight, heart rate, the work performed during training, competition results, and so on.

The most important indicator characterizing the body's condition is heart rate. A student must learn to measure their pulse before exercise, after completing specific exercises, and at the end of an independent training session. The instructor must explain the typical changes in heart rate under physical load and how to recognize the phases of recovery.

All these indicators should be entered into the diary. Keeping a diary with records of performed work and self-monitoring data helps the instructor or coach conduct objective monitoring of the student's activity.

Developing students' skills for independent engagement in physical culture and sports is an important pedagogical task. Its solution requires using comprehensive means of influencing students' consciousness.

It is advisable to carry out continuous, purposeful work during physical education classes. The ultimate goal of this work should be the formation of a stable need for systematic physical activity and sports in HEI graduates.

All mass physical culture activities conducted at the higher education institution are aimed at achieving a single goal – strengthening and preserving health, and maintaining the physical and mental working capacity of students.

