

Body Type as an Influence on Physical Activity.

Note: This information is most suitable for division three and four.

With practice and determination everyone has the ability to succeed at any physical activity they choose. But you can learn a lot about the types of physical activity that may come more easily to you by examining your body type.

There is a body typing system developed by Sheldon that is commonly followed. There are three generally accepted body type extremes:

Type I (Mesomorph): This body type has a well-distributed body mass with no specific concentrations of weight in any specific area. But this body type does have clear distinctions in shoulder, chest/bust, waist and hip measurements. This body type can move easily, because there is no major concentration of weight that might be a barrier to movement.

Type II (Ectomorph): People with this body type have the narrowest shoulders and lightest bones. They lack the curves or definition in the shoulders, chest/bust or hips usual of the Type I. They are typically lean and fast with excellent endurance. This type is a classic marathoner, but can be susceptible to injury because of weak joints.

Type III (Endomorphs): This is the powerhouse body type. Type III's have a strong, compact body with a low centre of gravity. They have a greater concentration of body mass in the torso and legs than other types. This body type is great for quick but stable direction changes and side to side movements. People with this body type also have the loosest joints, which allows a wide range of motion with the joint strength to prevent injury.

Keep in mind very few people represent a body type exactly, and most are a combination of types.

The ultimate factor determining your choice of physical activity will be what you **enjoy**. There is a fine line between what you can do naturally and what you can make your body do with appropriate conditioning and training. But understanding your body type and the activities that are suited to it may give you some insight into why you prefer certain activities, or why they seem to come easier to you.

Physical activity is for everyone, regardless of body type. You are born with your body type and there is little you can do to will change it. The key is to appreciate your body with all its inherent strengths and abilities.

Note to Teachers:

Providing information on body type can be a bit controversial depending on the approach used to share the information and the developmental readiness of the

students. It is presented here as a tool for teachers to use in sharing appropriate messages relating to accepting the inherent strengths of individual body types, and understanding that every type has strengths.

The key to this information is to convey to students that understanding body type can help them appreciate why they are better at some activities than others.. Physical activity is good for everyone, regardless of body type. You can not change your body type, but you can train your body to do anything you choose.

It is up to you as a teacher to determine when or how to share this information based on your students developmental readiness, and ability to use the information in a positive way.

