Physical Fitness is only one part of total fitness. It is part of a triangle of fitness including mental health and social health. Each area of fitness relates to the others. Your fitness level is constantly changing and influenced by many factors. It is possible to be weak in one fitness area and competent in others. Often, a weak area may keep you from improving in other areas.

Physical fitness is made up of eleven different parts: five are health-related, and six are skill-related. Each of the following is one of the five parts that are health-related fitness components.

**CARDIOVASCULAR** fitness is the ability to exercise the entire body for long periods of time. It requires a strong heart, healthy lungs, and clear blood vessels to supply the body with oxygen.

**STRENGTH** is the amount of force you can put forth with your muscles without getting tired. It is often measured by how much weight you can lift. People with strength have fewer problems with backaches and can carry out their daily tasks efficiently.

**MUSCULAR ENDURANCE** is the ability to use the muscles many times without getting tired. People with good muscular endurance are likely to have better posture, have fewer back problems and be better able to resist getting tired than people who lack muscular endurance.

**FLEXIBILITY** is the ability to use your joints fully. You are flexible when the muscles are long enough and the joints are free enough to allow movement. People with good flexibility have fewer sore and injured muscles. For example, people with poor flexibility in the muscle of the back of the leg are more likely to injure a leg muscle.

**BODY FATNESS** is the percentage of body weight that is fat compared to other body tissue such as bone and muscle. People who have a high percentage of body fat are more likely to be sick and have a higher death rate than lean people.

For good health, you should have at least some of each of the health-related parts of fitness. Having good health-related fitness keeps you from developing health problems related to a lack of exercise, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, back pain, and being over-weight. Older people are more likely to have these problems than younger people, but conditions have their beginnings early in life. Habits being set as a teen are hard to break as an adult. People who are fit feel better, look better and have more energy. You do not have to be a great athlete to have good health and be physically fit. Doing regular exercise can improve anyone’s health-related fitness.
Six areas of fitness are considered skill-related. These can be described as:

**AGILITY** is the ability to change the position of the body quickly and to control the movement of your whole body. If you have good agility, you are likely to be good at activities such as gymnastics, wrestling, dancing, and soccer.

**BALANCE** is the ability to keep an upright posture while you are standing still or moving. People who have good balance are likely to be good at gymnastics, surfing, skateboarding, or skiing. Balance is necessary to be successful in most sports.

**COORDINATION** is the ability to use your senses, such as your eyes, with other body parts, such as your arms or feet, or to use two or more body parts together. People with good hand-eye or hand-foot coordination would probably be good at hitting and kicking games such as softball, tennis, soccer, golf, and ping-pong. Coordination is helpful in all sports and games.

**POWER** is the ability to do strength performances quickly. It includes both speed and strength. People with power might have the ability to perform a shot put, play football, speed swim, or hit a homerun.

**REACTION TIME** is the amount of time it takes you to get moving once you see the need to move. People with good reaction time are able to make fast starts in track or swimming, dodge a tackle, or grab a rebound. Reaction time is necessary for safe driving and bicycling.

**SPEED** is the ability to perform a movement or to cover a distance in a short period of time. People with leg speed have the ability to run fast and people with good arm speed can throw fast or hit a fast ball.

Being good at these skill-related parts of fitness helps you to be good at sports and games. Different sports required different parts of skill-related fitness, but most sports require several of these parts. Skills can be improved with practice, and skill-related fitness is no different. Some people have a more natural ability in these areas than others, but with practice you can improve your skill level in any area. Good health comes from doing activities designed to improve your health-related fitness.