Flexibility Activity

Explanation:
Flexibility is an important part of fitness. Muscles stiffen as they become older. If muscles are never stretched, they tighten and begin to limit movement. Combing hair and tying shoes require flexibility. If a person does not stretch consistently, one day he/she may not be able to do daily tasks. Golfers need flexibility in the hips and shoulders. This allows them to rotate the golf club farther and in turn hit the ball a greater distance. Softball and baseball players need flexibility in their shoulders and arms. This means they can bring the ball back farther, which allows them to throw the ball harder. Flexibility is required for everyday movements, from tying shoes to throwing a ball. Stretch and be active every day to remain flexible.

Directions:
Throwing Activity
1. Have students line up on a sideline of the gym and give each of them a ball to throw.
2. The students will attempt to throw the ball across the gym using a restrictive motion. Their elbow will be down at their side while throwing. Tell the students to attempt to knock down the wall on the other side of the gym. Repeat this three times.
3. After throwing, lead the students in the backscratcher stretch and kung foo stretch (see flexibility unit). Explain to the students that these movements stretch the shoulder and triceps muscles, which are used while throwing.
4. The students will attempt to throw the ball across the gym using a full range of motion. Tell them to throw as hard as possible. They will bring their arms behind their heads to throw. Repeat this three times. Explain to the students that having good flexibility in their shoulder muscles allows them to throw harder and farther.

Running Activity
1. Have students line up on a sideline of the gym.
2. The students will run across the gym with straight legs. Repeat this three times.
3. After running, lead the students in the pelican stretch and new hurdler stretch (see flexibility unit). Explain to the students that these movements stretch the leg muscles used during running.
4. The students will again run across the gym using a full range of motion. Explain to the students that having flexibility in the muscles used while running allows them to run faster.

Assessment Ideas:
1. Students explain to partner how flexibility improves performance
2. Students explain how flexibility is important to being healthy.