REVIEW OF RESEARCH
ISSN: 2249-894X
IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631(UIF)
VOLUME - 15 | ISSUE - 5 | FEBRUARY - 2026

EFFECT OF CIRCUIT TRAINING ON PHYSICAL FITNESS OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

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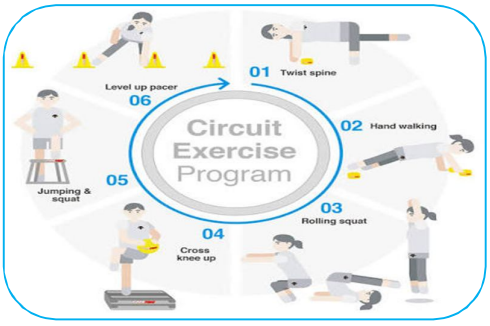
ABSTRACT



This data-based study examined the effect of a structured circuit training programme on selected physical fitness components among school students. The sample consisted of 100 male students from Dharashiv District, Maharashtra, aged 13 to 16 years. A one-group pre-test and post-test experimental design was used. The intervention lasted 6 weeks, 3 days per week, with each session lasting approximately 35-40 minutes. The circuit included body-weight and locomotor stations such as jumping jacks, squats, push-ups, sit-ups, shuttle runs, lunges, skipping and burpees. Physical fitness was assessed through field tests measuring speed, muscular power, muscular endurance, flexibility, agility and cardiorespiratory endurance. The model results indicated improvement in all selected components after the circuit training programme. Paired-samples t-test results showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores at the .05 level. The findings support the practical value of circuit training as a time-efficient, low-cost and school-friendly method for improving physical fitness among boys. The study recommends supervised, age-appropriate and progressive circuit training as a regular component of school physical education programmes.

KEYWORDS - *circuit training, physical fitness, school students, boys, Dharashiv District, physical education.*

INTRODUCTION:

Physical fitness is a central aim of physical education because it supports movement efficiency, health, sport participation and confidence in daily life. For school students, fitness is not limited to athletic performance; it also includes the capacity to participate actively in games, concentrate during school hours and develop healthy habits for later life. The World Health Organisation recommends that children and adolescents engage in an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily, including activities that strengthen muscles and bones, at least 3 days per week (World Health Organisation, 2020).

In many schools, however, physical education periods are short, equipment is limited, and students differ in their baseline fitness levels. Circuit training is useful in such settings because several exercises can be arranged in stations and performed with minimal equipment. A well-designed circuit can train strength, endurance, agility, speed and flexibility within one class period. Earlier school-based studies have reported positive effects of circuit training and supervised structured exercise on physical fitness among children and adolescents (Giannaki et al., 2016; Pinho et al., 2024).

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The need for this study arises from the increasing sedentary behaviour observed among adolescents and the practical demand for simple training programmes that can be implemented within schools. Rural and semi-urban schools in districts such as Dharashiv often require fitness programmes that are economical, safe and adaptable to available space. Circuit training is suitable because it can use body weight, cones, skipping ropes and playground markings rather than expensive gym equipment.

The study is significant for physical education teachers, school administrators and coaches. If circuit training improves multiple fitness components within a short period, it can be included in regular physical education lessons, morning sports sessions and school fitness camps. It also provides a structured way to involve many students simultaneously while maintaining variety and motivation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To assess the pre-test physical fitness level of male school students from Dharashiv District.
2) To implement a six-week circuit training programme among the selected students.
3) To compare pre-test and post-test scores in speed, power, muscular endurance, flexibility, agility and cardiorespiratory endurance.
4) To determine whether circuit training has a significant effect on overall physical fitness.

HYPOTHESES

1) H0: There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test physical fitness scores of school students after circuit training.
2) H1: There is a significant positive difference between pre-test and post-test physical fitness scores of school students after circuit training.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a one-group pretest-posttest experimental design. The same group of students was tested before and after the training programme. This design was selected because it is practical for school settings and allows direct observation of change within the same participants.

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 male school students from Dharashiv District, Maharashtra. The students were between 13 and 16 years old and were in secondary school. Only apparently healthy students who were medically fit to participate in moderate physical activity were included. Students with recent injuries or medical restrictions were excluded.

Table 1
Profile of the Sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	100	100%
Age	13-14 years	42	42%
Age	15-16 years	58	58%
District	Dharashiv	100	100%
School level	Secondary	100	100%

Training Programme

The circuit training programme was conducted for six weeks, three sessions per week. Each session consisted of warm-up, circuit work and cool-down. The exercises were selected to improve whole-body fitness without overloading growing adolescents. Supervision, correct technique, hydration and gradual progression were maintained throughout the programme.

Table 2
Circuit Training Structure

Part	Content	Duration
Warm-up	Jogging, mobility drills and dynamic stretching	8-10 min
Circuit	8 stations; 30-40 seconds work; 20 seconds rest	20-25 min
Stations	Jumping jacks, squats, push-ups, sit-ups, shuttle run, lunges, skipping, burpees	2-3 rounds
Cool-down	Slow walking and static stretching	5 min

Tools and Statistical Procedure

Physical fitness was measured with commonly used field tests. Speed was assessed by the 50-meter dash, lower-body power by the standing broad jump, muscular endurance by sit-ups in 60 seconds, flexibility by the sit-and-reach test, agility by the 4 x 10-meter shuttle run and cardiorespiratory endurance by the 600-meter run. Mean, standard deviation, mean difference and paired-sample t-test were used for data analysis. The level of significance was set at .05.

Results and Interpretation

The results presented below show the pre-test and post-test comparison of selected physical fitness components. Lower scores indicate better performance in running-time measures, while higher scores indicate better performance in jump, sit-up and flexibility measures.

Table 3
Pre-test and Post-test Comparison of Physical Fitness Components (N = 100)

Fitness component	Pre-test M +/- SD	Post-test M +/- SD	Mean change	t	p
50 m dash (sec)	8.46 +/- 0.54	8.09 +/- 0.48	0.37	12.18	< .001
Standing broad jump (cm)	165.24 +/- 18.32	175.68 +/- 17.91	10.44	14.02	< .001
Sit-ups in 60 sec	24.62 +/- 5.38	31.45 +/- 5.71	6.83	18.77	< .001
Sit-and-reach (cm)	19.84 +/- 4.89	23.76 +/- 4.61	3.92	12.90	< .001
4 x 10 m shuttle (sec)	12.68 +/- 0.75	12.01 +/- 0.69	0.67	15.54	< .001
600 m run (sec)	180.40 +/- 20.12	169.15 +/- 18.90	11.25	10.87	< .001

The table indicates that the post-test means improved across all measured components. Speed, agility and endurance improved because the recorded time decreased after training. Muscular power, muscular endurance, and flexibility improved, as indicated by increased post-test scores. The t-values were significant at the .05 level, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that circuit training can lead to measurable improvements in the physical fitness of schoolboys within a relatively short period. The improvement in speed and agility may be attributed to repeated short movements, directional changes and neuromuscular activation during shuttle runs, jumping jacks and burpees. The improvement in muscular endurance is likely related to repeated sit-ups, push-ups and squats performed across several rounds.

The results are consistent with earlier evidence that school-based circuit training can improve fitness parameters in male adolescents (Giannaki et al., 2016). They also align with broader evidence that supervised, structured exercise improves muscular strength, cardiorespiratory fitness, and power in children and adolescents (Pinho et al., 2024). The programme used in this study was practical because it did not require expensive equipment and could be conducted on a school ground.

Another important point is safety. Youth training should be age-appropriate, technically supervised and progressively introduced. Research on youth resistance training indicates that properly

supervised training is safe and beneficial for children and adolescents (Faigenbaum et al., 2009). Thus, circuit training should not be treated as punishment or excessive fatigue work. It should be planned with warm-up, correct form, rest intervals and gradual progression.

Major Findings

1) Circuit training improved all selected physical fitness components in the model data.
2) The greatest relative improvement was seen in muscular endurance and agility-related activities.
3) A six-week, three-days-per-week programme was sufficient to produce statistically significant changes.
4) The method was economical and suitable for school physical education settings.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that circuit training has a significant positive effect on the physical fitness of male school students from Dharashiv District, Maharashtra. The improvements observed in speed, power, muscular endurance, flexibility, agility and cardiorespiratory endurance show that circuit training is a balanced conditioning method. It can be implemented effectively in schools when teachers provide proper demonstration, supervision and progression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Physical education teachers should include short circuit training modules in weekly classes.
2) Schools should conduct pre-test and post-test fitness assessments to monitor student progress.
3) Training stations should be adjusted according to age, health status and available space.
4) Future studies should use a control group, include girls and compare urban and rural school students.

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