

**MANUAL OF PHYSICAL
TRAINING FOR THE PRIMARY
AND GRAMMAR GRADES OF THE
MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Manual of Physical Training for the Primary and Grammar Grades of the Milwaukee Public Schools by Milton C. Potter & George Wittich

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MILTON C. POTTER & GEORGE WITTICH

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Manual
of
Physical Training
for the
Primary and Grammar Grades
of the
Milwaukee Public Schools

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UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

1914

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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DEPT OF
CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

This Hand Book is intended for the public graded schools of Milwaukee. The instructions are imparted directly to the teachers and pupils by trained specialists; it is, therefore, unnecessary to discuss in detail in this book the method of teaching the exercises as well as all other points pertaining to the disposition and handling of classes within and out of doors.

The exercises of this outline are designed for the purpose of bringing about the following results in the physical make-up of the school children of the grades:

1. The increase of the circulation and general distribution of the blood by means of vigorous rhythmical action of the larger muscle groups, and a thorough aeration of the blood through deep and somewhat forced respiration.
2. The improvement of chest capacity, of posture and the maintenance thereof.

The former is achieved through stretching, certain trunk and neck exercises and forced respiration, and the latter through so-called corrective exercises in standing, sitting, kneeling and balancing.

3. The development of exactness of motion, quickness of response, and a moderate degree of strength through progressively arranged forms of exercises and combinations, as well as properly applied commands and time-measure.

Short discussions of the effects of these exercises on posture, development of chest, aeration of the blood, of the ill effects of habitual faulty sitting, one-sided carrying of objects, such as little children, and bags of newspapers, and of the importance of changing such burdens often, during the

time set aside for physiology are of greater practical value to the pupils than the dry text-book physiology so often taught in our schools.

PLACES FOR EXERCISING AND THE PLAYING OF GAMES:

The schoolyard is theoretically the proper place for formal physical exercises, athletics and games, if the surface of the same is prepared so as to prevent the development of dust. But, since strong winds are prevalent in our locality in the Fall of the year and inclement weather frequent in the Spring of the year, we must of necessity often resort to the school hall and the classroom as places for exercising.

EXERCISING IN THE CLASSROOM:

If permanent exercising in the classroom becomes necessary, the following rules should be observed:

The first and second grades should have their physical exercises at one time during the morning session, and the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at another; the seventh and eighth grades should exercise when the lower grades have their recess in the afternoon.

This arrangement will permit a closing of the ventilating shafts, of those rooms where physical exercises are going on, and will make possible a thorough aeration of these classrooms by means of the opening of the windows. This plan is suggested because the opening of the windows of one or more classrooms without closing the ventilation shafts, disturbs the circulation of the air of the whole building when the fan is in operation.

The windows must however be opened before the beginning of the exercises; opening them shortly before the execution of the breathing exercise is worthless. The best plan is to appoint monitors for this purpose.

The games described at the end of this Hand Book should be played during recess outside of the school building; a few games of a higher organization, such as Captain Ball and modified Basket Ball, may be played by the higher grades

during the winter months in the assembly halls. The assembly halls should, for this purpose, be kept clean and well ventilated.

Many of our teachers consider the going out with the children into the yard during recess an extra tax on their nerves. They have never made a greater mistake. Moving about in the fresh air will benefit the teachers as well as the children. Our teachers sit too much and too long in the classrooms. Besides this, teachers who do not associate with the children in their plays and games fail to learn to understand the true character of their pupils, which is exhibited in physical play more than at any other time.

THE UNITS OF THE DAY'S ORDER:

The First Unit—

The Day's Order of Physical Exercises prescribed in this outline begins with half-automatic rhythmic exercises of the larger groups of muscles for the purpose of stimulating circulation and respiration. Such forms of exercises are absolutely necessary as first unit of each lesson because of the accumulation of venous blood in certain parts of the child's body during the long physical inactivity caused by sitting.

The half-automatic character of these exercises furthermore relieves and diverts the mind of the child from mental strain.

The most important of these exercises are: Running, skipping, hopping, quick bending and straightening of the knees, quick alternate raising of the knees, and raising of one knee combined with bending of trunk forward in alternation with straightening of the leg backward and the trunk upward.

Whenever possible, running out of doors for two to three minutes should be substituted in place of the first prescribed unit of the daily classroom lessons, because no single exercise can supplant running out of doors as an introductory and invigorating exercise.

Low temperature is no cause for omitting the running out of doors. As long as the pupils are running vigorously with lips closed, they will never take cold.

The pupils must furthermore be taught to run on the balls of the feet, move the bent arms freely, and breathe through the nostrils while running.

Running, skipping and hopping within doors should be omitted in schools that are not equipped with *vacuum cleaners*; and also in those whose construction was not intended for such a strain and where other classes will be disturbed. In such places the prescribed exercises of the first unit must be substituted; their effect is similar to that of running.

The Second Unit—

Facing, stepping and marching of the second unit when taken in the classroom and hall, must be executed with military precision, but lightly; the chest must be active and arched and the head held erect. Watching the feet must not be tolerated. If executed in this manner, these exercises are an excellent means for establishing an elastic walking step and improving the carriage of the body. Besides this, these exercises serve to some degree the restoration of normal circulation and respiration.

The forward and backward stepping and marching usually begin with the left foot; it is, however, advisable, to have the pupils begin frequently with the right foot, in order to avoid one-sidedness.

The marching, and the rocking step with singing, also the rocking step with trunk and arm exercises of the second unit of some of the lessons designed for the first, second, third, and fourth grades are added for the purpose of developing to some degree graceful movement and the sense of rhythm.

The marching exercises of the higher grades must not be taken in the form of a drill, but by direction, for the purpose of developing quickness of thinking and reaction.

The Third Unit:

Deep breathing is taken for the purpose of strengthening the muscles of respiration, arching the chest and purifying quickly the venous blood. The inflation of the lungs must be complete and forced as must also be the exhalation. Inhalation and exhalation need not always occupy the same length of time. Short and forced respiration effects the lung-tissue and the muscles of respiration more than does slow respiration.

In the lower grades the teachers may count from 1 to 8 for each respiration; in the higher grades from 1 to 12 for each slow respiration.

Having the pupils place hands on chest *occasionally* to ascertain the effect of the breathing exercise on the chest, will always prove an incentive to better efforts.

Fourth Unit:—

Balance Exercises are either postures or very slow movements of the whole body, or parts thereof, executed on an unusually small base for the purpose of improving carriage and skill in the control of the body.

Most of the balance exercises of this Hand Book designated for the higher grades are combined with neck exercises.

After the body has been thoroughly prepared and warmed up through the accelerating and corrective exercises of the first four units, those exercises that are designed for the development of general skill and strength are then in order.

Fundamental Types of Exercises of the various parts of the body and the rules governing their execution:

1. Neck Exercises:

A firmly fixed condition of the shoulders and trunk is necessary in the exercises of this type in order to enable these parts to act as a basis for the action of the muscles of the neck. Since it requires a considerable degree of co-ordination to fix the shoulders for such exercises, and since the average pupil of the primary grades does not possess this degree of co-ordination, we must apply means that will aid in the fixation of the shoulders.

Taking neck exercises in sitting with *shoulderblades pressed firmly against the back of the seat* is one way of accomplishing this desired end in the primary grades.

Pressing with the hands against the near edge of the desk will fix the shoulderblades still more firmly against the back of the seat.

Neck Exercises must be executed slowly, mainly because jerky movements of the head may prove injurious; slow and powerful contraction of the muscles of the neck will effect the same as well as the points of attachment (the bones) in a strengthening and corrective manner.