Build a Body

Materials needed: 3 hula-hoops and 1 additional hoop for every 4 students, 20 balls of 3 different colors, picture of a currently popular thin person (the girls could probably furnish this)

1. Set up three hula-hoops in the middle of the gym. Fill one hoop up with the balls of one color to represent fat, one hoop with the balls of another color to represent fluid, and one hoop with the balls of the last color to represent lean body tissue.

2. Spread the rest of the hoops in a large circle around the three middle hoops.

3. Explain to the students the definition of body composition, and that the body needs some fat in order to function normally. There is a range of “normal” for body fat percentages. Tell students that everybody’s body is slightly different, but for the activity today, to use the estimate that fluids make up approximately 60% of body mass, and the rest of the lean tissue makes up about 20% of body mass. That leaves a medium point in the recommended ranges of about 20% for fat. Explain that with these percentages, it is easy to tell that the body needs a large amount of water to function well, so drinking a lot of water makes sense.

4. Divide the class into groups with roughly four students in a group, and send each group to one of the empty hoops around the activity area.

5. Explain that each group must strive to build a body with two fat objects, six fluid objects, and two lean body objects.

6. One at a time, a member of a group may leave the team’s hoop area to bring an object to the team’s hoop or discard an object from the team’s hoop. Tell students to choose a sequence, so that they know which team member they follow and can move into action quickly. Students can carry one object at a time. They can run, but they must carefully place balls in the hula-hoops.

7. Team members may take objects from other groups to get the right body proportions for their team, or they may give other teams objects to upset the proportions that those teams have acquired. Students may not block their hula-hoops from other teams or push other students out of the way.

8. Have the non-active team members working together on strategies.

9. When a team has two fats, six fluids, and two lean objects they should sit around their hoop and put their arms up to let the teacher know that they were successful.

10. Verbally process:
   Why is it important to drink a lot of water?
   Have a picture showing a famous person who is extremely thin. Brainstorm why pictures like these might have a negative effect on young people. (Some people are naturally thin. It’s when a person takes extreme measures to be thin that we become concerned.)

Alter the activity by placing objects that represent the proportion of food servings from the new food pyramid in the hoops, to give students information on nutrition.