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➤ [Current Issue](#)

➤ [Back Issue](#)

➤ [Most recent articles](#)

➤ [Index](#)

➤ [Advanced search](#)

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[article](#)



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 [How to cite item](#)

[item](#)



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Changes in weight indexes and aerobic fitness of physical education students over three years of college

Yoav Meckel, Yair Galily, Dan Nemet, Alon Eliakim

Abstract

Data from the national surveys indicate that physical activity and dietary patterns of many college students do not meet the recommendations of health and fitness experts, and that 29.9% of college students are overweight or obese. Thus, the aim of the present study is to track changes in body composition and aerobic fitness of physical education students during their college years. The students (n=174, 89 females, 85 males) were evaluated for body weight, percent

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body fat, lean body mass and aerobic fitness (2000m running time) at the beginning of their freshman and at the end of junior year. Body weight and percent body fat increased significantly in both female and male students. Aerobic fitness decreased significantly in male students.

Increases in body weight and fat percentage occurred mainly in initially thin males and females but remained unchanged in initially overweight students. Aerobic fitness decreased significantly in the initially fastest students but improved significantly in the initially slowest students. Findings suggest that the structured PE program and college atmosphere were not sufficient for the upper quartile students to maintain their body weight and fitness level over the three years in college, suggesting that fitness considerations in this population should be addressed more vigorously.

Key words: College; Physical
Education students; aerobic fitness;
body fat

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Education. University of Alicante. C/ Aeroplano s/n - 03690 San
Vicente del Raspeig - Alicante - Spain jhse@ua.es