

Justification for Marching in a lifetime sports program

The many benefits of marching and drill and ceremonies can and will contribute much to the physical development of youth. Examples:

1. **Voluntary attention to detail** in deportment, poise, and elocution provide practice and reinforcement that will last a lifetime. JROTC cadets sign on to learn these habits, and are therefore more likely to own them later in life.
 2. **Teamwork** is a critical component of D&C because it is a unit-based educational experience. JROTC curriculum theory and practice emphasizes cadet leadership, so willingness to assist their peers permeates the cadet culture. Skill mastery is a team requirement. Assessments include unit as well as individual performance.
 3. **Gait correction** is widely discussed in the field of body mechanics. Toe-out walking, forward neck, and numerous other body mechanics deficiencies are epidemic in today's culture, and are best corrected or prevented during childhood or youth. The theory and practice of D&C are ideally suited to address these issues.
 4. **Correct walking** feels good, so students who learn to walk well are more apt to walk recreationally. Efficient walking will also help prevent micro-traumas to joints that prematurely destroy the lower extremities.
 5. **Aligned shoulder girdles** promote athleticism, enhance nonverbal communication, and contribute to organic function. Marching promotes optimal shoulder girdle integrity, mobility, and efficiently.
 6. **Breath control and efficiency** is a fundamental D&C skill that offers lifelong benefits. Voice control and elocution improve communication, promote confidence, and contribute to leadership capacity. Proper breathing is also vital to good health, athletic performance, and stress reduction.
 7. **Good posture** and body mechanics are vital components of functional fitness,¹ and fitness is associated with academic success. Properly instructed D&C is ideal for teaching good posture, proper deportment, and refined bearing. Poor posture is epidemic in our children and youth, so D&C is especially relevant to their needs.
 8. **Muscular endurance requires extended sub maximal exertion.** Vigorous unit marching is safe, inclusive, and engaging aerobic training. Drill with rifle adds an anaerobic dimension to the demands, occasional instruction in double time marching raises the bar even further.
 9. **Ability to pivot properly on the balls and heels** is critical for proper walking. Students deprived of these basic skills will transfer these deficiencies to running and directional change under multiplied stress. Injuries to the knee, ankle, and other areas of the lower extremities are common in those who have not learned foundational patterns of directional change. No skill better prepares students to shift naturally from ball to heel during directional change than marching. The difference in these skills between trained and untrained students is obvious, and those who learn directional change from both static and marching situations are much better prepared to move efficiently.
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- 10. Spatial awareness** is important for productivity, safety, and general efficiency in motion. Precision movement provides a strong foundation for more complex spatial challenges. Close quarter drills require constant awareness of one's self and others. Marching and double time drills develop exceptional spatial awareness, and sensitivity to the movement of others.
- 11. Drill with rifle** provides important training in firearm safety and respect. Such skills will help reduce accidents as some students choose to hunt and/or serve in the military.
- 12. Patriotism** and respect for our nation's symbols is essential for national survival. D&C teaches cadets to care for flags and understand the processes by which individuals mold themselves into citizens who respect each other, cooperate toward a noble purpose, and present themselves as disciplined, productive and noble citizens.

Drill and Ceremony offers much to the physical education experience, and JROTC cadre are ideally suited to teach these vital skills. Retired NCOs and officers from all branches have also received valuable preparation in physical/motor fitness development. Many of our nation's top experts in movement science are involved in the development of physical readiness training doctrine in all our branches. Recommend further expansion of the JROTC curriculum into the area physical/motor fitness. Further refinement of the JROTC physical/motor fitness curriculum will allow for increasingly more demanding performance-based tests.