



Give young women a say in what gets their hearts racing, and chances are they'll be more willing to sweat it out in Grade 11 and 12 physical education classes. This is what four UVic researchers found when they teamed up to reverse the trend of fewer young women enrolling in PE when it becomes optional in senior high school.

If women learn to exercise regularly at a young age and sustain it through their teens, the research often shows they'll be likely to find time to exercise for the rest of their lives, says UVic's Dr. Sandra Gibbons, explaining why the trend concerns researchers. Only 10 per cent of female students in BC take PE in Grades 11 and 12, compared to 20–25 per cent of male students.

Gibbons and fellow physical education professors Drs. Geraldine Van Gyn, Joan Wharf Higgins, and Catherine Gaul joined forces three years ago to explore the rea-

sons for low female enrolment and help teachers change their PE classes to appeal more to females. Says Gibbons, "There's plenty of info on why it happens. We wanted to take it to the next step and help teachers make change."

All four researchers have an interest in adolescent females and physical activity, but they come at the interest from different disciplines within physical education. Their research was made possible in part by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The first step involved talking to a number of female students from various schools in Victoria.

Says Gibbons, "We found out that young women would like to be active; however, they are interested in a variety of physical activities beyond team sports." As one discussion participant who chose to not take PE-11 put it,



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