

BENEFITS OF EXERCISES FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract:

Physical activity and sports are generally promoted for their positive effect on children's physical health; regular participation in physical activity in childhood is associated with a decreased cardiovascular risk in youth and adulthood.

There is also a growing body of literature suggesting that physical activity has beneficial effects on several mental health outcomes, including health-related quality of life and better mood states.

In addition... there is a strong belief that regular participation in physical activity is linked to enhancement of brain function and cognition, thereby positively influencing academic performance.

KEY WORDS:

Physical activity and sports , physical health , body of literature .

INTRODUCTION

Our children are our future—and understanding and supporting their natural yearning for physical activity will help lead them to a lifetime of happy and healthy living. If we joyfully teach them how to include healthy exercise from the early stages of their development, we will be giving our children a gift that will endure throughout their lives.

Among the many benefits are physical fitness, confidence and stronger self-esteem, more energy, better memory, and simply a good feeling about themselves—and they are easy to achieve. Our Take the Magic Step team is as concerned as many of you about the growing problem of childhood obesity and the lack of exercise in their lives. Whether this obesity and inactivity is caused by the popularity of video games or the declining hours of physical education in schools, it is a wake-up call for everyone. Happily, there are ways of reversing this growing trend and helping our children to enjoy daily exercise and outdoor activities, which they love given the opportunity

When many people decide to "get fit," they assume it involves rigorous activity. But you don't have to spend hours in a gym to be physically active. People can get in shape by performing everyday activities in the home. Every time you and your child throw a softball, swim a lap, climb a flight of stairs, walk to the store, or carry packages, your health and fitness levels are improving.

When someone is physically fit, she feels and looks better, and she stays healthier. The earlier a child starts getting in shape, the more she'll reduce her risk of numerous illnesses. Here are some of the benefits that physical activity offers your child:

From a public health perspective, regular exercise can play a major role in preventing several leading degenerative diseases in industrialized societies. Although most degenerative diseases such as coronary artery disease manifest themselves in adulthood, their genesis may be traced to unhealthy behaviors in earlier years. In Healthy Children 2000, the United States Department of Health and Human-Services (1992) noted that childhood is a critical time for developing healthy attitudes and behavior patterns related to tobacco use, diet, physical activity, and other health-related behaviors that may persist into adulthood.

The proper amount of exercise is presumably important for the optimal development and health

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status of children. Too much or too little exercise may have some adverse effects (McKeag, 1991). The purpose of this report is to provide a broad overview of the exercise-related concerns of pediatric health professionals.

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1. It strengthens the heart. The heart is a muscle. Like other muscles, its performance improves when it's regularly challenged by exercise. The heart responds to exercise by becoming stronger and more efficient. Strengthening the heart muscle can help ward off heart disease -- the leading cause of death in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services -- even in early childhood.

2. It helps keep arteries and veins clear. Exercise reduces the amount of harmful cholesterol and fats in a person's blood. It increases the flexibility of the walls of blood vessels, and helps to lower blood pressure. This can reduce a person's risk for heart attack and stroke.

3. It strengthens the lungs. Working hard increases lung capacity, and their efficiency in moving air in and out of the body. As a result, more oxygen is drawn into the body and more carbon dioxide and other waste gases are expelled. Regular exercise helps prevent the decline in oxygen intake that occurs naturally with age or as a result of inactivity.

4. It reduces blood sugar levels. Exercise prevents sugar from accumulating in the blood by triggering muscles to take up more glucose from the bloodstream and use it for energy. This can reduce a person's risk of developing diabetes.

5. It controls weight. When a person is sedentary, he tends to be taking in more calories than are needed. These unused calories accumulate as fat. A person who is physically active may have a deficit of calories, which takes fat away and lowers weight. Lowered weight is good for the heart and can be beneficial in people with diabetes.

6. It strengthens bones. Just as muscles grow stronger when physically stressed, bones also respond by getting stronger. Exercise increases bone density, which helps prevent osteoporosis, a condition in which bones lose density, weaken, and become porous and fragile.

7. It helps prevent cancer. People who exercise regularly have lower incidences of cancer. The cancers most affected include colon, prostate, uterine, and breast cancers.

8. It regulates blood pressure. Exercise has been shown to reduce stress levels. As the levels of stress in a person's body subsides, his blood pressure and his risk for heart disease decline.

9. It improves energy levels. Regular exercise often makes people feel more energetic, allows them to be more active, and reduces the likelihood that they'll tire during the day.

10. It enhances emotional well-being. Most people report that they feel calm and have a sense of well-being after they exercise. Exercise, according to one theory, releases beta-endorphin, a natural substance in the body that is hundreds of times more potent than morphine. Another theory points to serotonin as the cause of the exercise high. Increased levels of serotonin in the central nervous system are associated with feelings of well-being, heightening of appetite, and lessening of mental depression. The weight loss that accompanies exercise can also cause people to feel better about themselves.

EXERCISE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Keeping kids active at school is a superb way to increase learning, focus and even test results. As many of you reading this have likely experienced, if your mind is feeling cluttered or you're having a mid-afternoon slump, a brisk walk or a quick workout can give you a renewed sense of clarity and focus. This is certainly true for kids too.

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Two years ago, ABC News reported on a special program being implemented at Naperville Central High School, where students could take part in a dynamic gym class at the beginning of the day, and had access to exercise bikes and balls throughout the day in their classrooms. The results were astounding. Those who participated nearly doubled their reading scores and math scores increased 20-fold!

Research has shown that after 30 minutes on the treadmill, students solve problems up to 10 percent more effectively.

Although it's becoming more widely known that physical activity has a direct result on brain function, many schools in the US are removing rather than improving their phys ed programs... This means it's up to you to encourage your child to stay active after school and on weekends in order to reap the wonderful brain-boosting benefits that exercise has to offer

EXERCISE BOOSTS BRAIN FUNCTION

Exercise encourages your brain to work at optimum capacity by causing nerve cells to multiply, strengthening their interconnections and protecting them from damage. Animal tests have also illustrated that during exercise their nerve cells release proteins known as neurotrophic factors. One in particular, called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), triggers numerous other chemicals that promote neural health, and has a direct benefit on brain functions, including learning. Further, exercise provides protective effects to your brain through:

- ❖ The production of nerve-protecting compounds
- ❖ Greater blood flow to your brain
- ❖ Improved development and survival of neurons
- ❖ Decreased risk of cardiovascular diseases

A 2010 study on primates published in Neuroscience also revealed that regular exercise not only improved blood flow to the brain, but also helped the monkeys learn new tasks twice as quickly as non-exercising monkeys; a benefit the researchers believe would hold true for people as well.

CONCLUSION

Physical exercise is good for mind, body, and spirit. Furthermore, team sports are good for learning accountability, dedication, and leadership; among many other traits. Putting it all together by playing a sport is a winning combination.

There is a lot of really good evidence about the links between participation in sports and physical activity and what that might be for children and young people. It increases pro-social behavior improves physical and mental health and helps achieve fundamental life skills.

So defiantly there is a link with getting kids more active, but also the nature of that activity can also have effects on improved confidence and self-esteem, social integration as well as academic learning itself

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