

The Importance of Doing Sport

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Annotation: Playing sports provides important benefits for young and old alike, ranging from improvement in fitness and health to development of team spirit and feelings of accomplishment. Find a sport that you love and you'll stick with it while at the same time learning some essential life lessons and reaping positive rewards.

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Playing sports, particularly those that involve a lot of activity, such as soccer, basketball, tennis and racquetball, can help you manage your weight, while also giving your muscles and cardiovascular system a good workout. Participating on a regular basis helps you burn calories. For example, a 155-pound person who plays basketball for an hour burns around 596 calories. Starting kids in a sport that they can play throughout their lives can get young people used to exercising on a regular basis, which will help them stay in shape as they get older.

Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence

Getting involved in a sport provides opportunities for individuals to see the results of their efforts. If you practice hard at your sport and see success, it builds self-esteem. If you defeat a challenging opponent, you're bound to feel that you've accomplished something worthwhile. Mastering a skill, such as a consistent serve in tennis, also boosts self-confidence.

Sports and Teamwork

Sports can provide a unique opportunity for participants to learn and appreciate the importance of teamwork. That's assuming you're playing a team sport, rather than an individual one, such as tennis or golf. If you're on a team, you learn what it means to do your share of the work and reap your share of the benefits. The idea is that everyone on a team learns to rely on everyone else.

Sports and Opportunities

Young people who excel in sports but have limited financial means find that sports can improve their odds of attending the college of their choice. While many athletic scholarships do not provide all the expenses for attending college, some can help considerably. If you have a knack for baseball, football, basketball or even the less common sports such as lacrosse or crew, your abilities may help lead you to an opportunity to play and learn in college. For many people, playing basketball is a fun and effective form of exercise. While other vigorous aerobic activities offer some of the same benefits, the additional advantages basketball offers makes it an enjoyable and even important part of their lifestyles. If you've never played basketball before, consider joining a recreational team or inviting a few friends out to a public park for a quick game.

Physical Benefits

Basketball develops physical fitness, as many sports do. However, the intense, fast-paced action of a typical basketball game simultaneously develops speed, hand-eye coordination and cardiovascular endurance in a way that sports such as baseball and softball might not. Moving quickly back and forth across the court develops lower-body fitness, while shooting, defending and passing develop upper-body fitness.

Weight Control

Playing basketball is an effective way to control your weight. A person who weighs 170 lbs. burns 617 calories playing a basketball game for an hour, according to the American Council on Exercise. Even if you don't participate in a full-court basketball game, you still can burn significant calories playing basketball. For example, a 170-lb. person who practices shooting the ball for an hour burns 347 calories.

Stress Relief

Playing basketball can provide stress relief. If you play a casual game with others, the camaraderie and competition will be a welcome distraction from your daily stresses. Other sports also might relax you, but unwinding with basketball doesn't require you to be a top athlete or collect a large group of people to play. Just taking practice shots by yourself at a local court gives you something constructive to focus on that has nothing to do with your hectic life.

Social Benefits

Culturally, basketball is an important sport in the United States. For youths, playing basketball is a healthy way to imitate their athletic heroes. For older individuals, playing basketball offers a way to engage in fun competition while getting regular, vigorous exercise. Basketball also provides constant social interaction, which benefits young and old players alike. Other sports, such as baseball, softball and soccer, often force players to maintain distant positions for long periods.

Any parent knows that young children are filled with energy, eager to run, jump and play. Transferring that natural energy to competitive sports can help keep kids active and healthy as they grow, and other distractions increase that may lead to a more sedentary lifestyle. Competitive sports such as soccer, track, basketball and swimming can also help kids learn important life lessons about teamwork and fair play. Participating in sports teaches children and teenagers how to compete in the real world. As they grow older they'll face competition in school, in the workforce and other areas of life. But these competitions don't have to be negative or unhealthy. Playing sports can help kids understand how competition works in a friendly environment, and that if you try your hardest, you have a better chance to succeed. Millions of American children and teenagers are overweight. This obesity epidemic has made the early onset of health problems such as diabetes more common. Participating in competitive youth sports burns calories and helps to prevent obesity. Additionally, many children who are active in sports are motivated to eat healthier foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Improved self-esteem is another benefit of competitive youth sports. When a child wins a game with his team, he feels accomplished and recognized. Even when he doesn't win, he can learn a valuable lesson: that you can't win every time. Losing with his team can also increase self-esteem, as he learns to hold his head high and feel proud for trying his best. Though sports participation may decrease risky behaviors in females, athletic males may have an increased risk of drinking, violence and abusing drugs. A 2009 study presented at the American Public Health Association's 137th Meeting and Exposition noted a correlation between teenage male athletes and risky behavior. Teen boys whose reputations are based on athletic ability, and those who receive preferential treatment, are particularly at risk. The study noted the importance of supporting teenage athletes yet cautioned against raising them to icon status.

Used literature

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