

5 REASONS WHY WOMEN AND GIRLS SHOULD PLAY SPORTS

Girls and women who engage in sports may do it to have fun, to get fit or to lose weight, but there is strong evidence that being active and playing sports has broader and more long-lasting benefits other than making life more enjoyable – which in itself is a good-enough reason. Research suggests that sports participation, other than improving the quality of daily life - can make a difference in the long-term development, health, as well as the in the educational and work achievement of girls and women. While there are many reasons, we will look at five important reasons why girls and women should play sports:



1. Girls who play sports do better in school. You might think that sports and athletics will take up all your study time. But research shows that girls who play sports do significantly better in school than those who don't. Exercise

improves learning, memory, and concentration, which can give active girls an advantage in the classroom. Participating in sports boosts girls' performance and puts them on a more equal footing with boys.



2. Girls who play sports learn teamwork and goal-setting skills. Sports teach valuable life skills. When you are working with team-mates, trainers or coaches to win games and

achieve goals, you're learning how to be successful. Those skills will serve you well at school, work and in life.



3. Sports are good for a girl's health. In addition to being fit and maintaining a healthy weight, girls who play sports are also less likely to smoke. Later in life, girls who exercise are less likely to get breast cancer or

osteoporosis. Participation in sport also reduces heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Physically active people have a reduced risk of heart disease and stroke compared to those with a **sedentary** lifestyle.

Exercise generally strengthens the immune system and there is evidence that exercising several times per week decreases menstrual complaints. Doing sports also is good for your mental health.



4. Playing sports boosts self-confidence, self esteem and self-perception. Girls who play sports feel better about themselves. Why? It builds confidence when you know you can practice, improve, and achieve

your goals. Sports are also a feel-good activity because they help girls get in shape, maintain a healthy weight, and make new friends. There also seems to a correlation between participating in sports and lower risks of unwanted sexual behaviour and pregnancy as well as reduced drug and alcohol abuse.



5. Exercise cuts the pressure and adds more vitality. Playing sports can lessen stress and help you feel happier. How? The brain chemicals released during exercise improve a person's mood. Friends are another

mood-lifter and being on a team creates tight bonds between friends. It's good to know your team-mates will support you — both on and off the field!

Girls who play sports get a lot more than just fitness, so come on girls, get out and get active!

With information from www.kidshealth.org

Glossary

Osteoporosis: is the thinning of bone tissue and loss of bone density over time, which leads to your back bending over time, and weakening of your bones.

Sedentary: Sedentary lifestyle is a type of lifestyle with no or irregular physical activity. A person who lives a sedentary lifestyle may sometimes be known as a couch potato.