

5 Reasons for Girls to Play Sports

We all know that regular physical exercise is good for a girl's body, mind, and spirit. But you can get your daily dose of endorphins from a jog around the block. So why play sports? The Women's Sports Foundation has discovered that sports offer some extra benefits for girls in addition to having fun and getting fit.

Here are a few:

1. **Girls who play sports do better in school.** You might think that athletics will take up all your study time. But research shows that girls who play sports do better in school and are more likely to graduate than those who don't. Exercise improves learning, memory, and concentration, which can give active girls an advantage when it comes to the classroom.
2. **Girls who play sports learn teamwork and goal-setting skills.** Working with coaches, trainers, and teammates to win games and meet goals is great practice for success later in life. Being a team player can make it easier to work with others and solve problems, whether on the field or in the workplace.
3. **Sports have hidden health benefits.** Some benefits of sports are obvious — like improving fitness and maintaining a healthy weight. But girls who play sports are also less likely to smoke and have a reduced chance of getting breast cancer and osteoporosis later in life. Sure, you can get these benefits from any type of exercise. But if you have trouble getting to the gym, there may be more incentive to show up and play if you know your coaches or teammates depend on you.
4. **Playing sports builds self-confidence.** Girls involved in athletics feel better about themselves, both physically and socially. It helps to build confidence when you see your skills improving and your goals becoming reality. Other esteem-boosting benefits of sports participation include getting in shape, maintaining a healthy weight, and making new friends.
5. **Exercise can cut the pressure.** Pressure is a big part of life. Playing sports can help you deal with it, since exercise is a natural mood lifter and a great way to relieve stress and fight depression. Plus, when you are on a team, you have friends who support you both on and off the field.

Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD

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