

17 Reasons Why You Should Enroll Your Daughter in Gymnastics Classes

By: [gymnasticshq](#) On: April 25, 2015

I think you'll agree with me when I say:

We all want to help our daughters grow up to be physically and mentally healthy and to give them greater odds of success later in life.

Well, there is something you can sign them up for that has been proven to produce healthy and fit girls with high self-esteem and mental toughness.

In this article I'm going to tell you the benefits of gymnastics: how gymnastics positively impacts young girls and the 17 reasons you should enroll your daughter in gymnastics.

But first: You may have seen Alway's #LikeAGirl video. Since when did "Like a Girl" become a bad thing? It makes me feel sad for all the girls growing up without self-confidence, and want to help change it. I know that when I have kids, and if they are girls, I will want to do everything possible to make sure they are strong, confident, healthy women when they grow up.

I think gymnastics is one way to help make that happen. I think the fact that it's largely a female sport, makes gyms an ideal place for little girls to start to learn self-confidence as they exercise their bodies. And as they grow up, become teenagers on a gymnastics team with girl friends that empower and root for one another.

I know both my sister and I found that with gymnastics. And I want your daughter to as well. Here are some of the benefits of gymnastics, and why you should enroll your daughter in gymnastics classes:

1. Gymnastics will help to make your daughter strong.

Swinging on the bars and learning skills like cartwheels that require her to support her own body weight build strength from an early age.

It's important to teach our girls when they are young that not only is being strong good for the body, but it's important in life. Strong girls are healthy, pretty girls.

2. Gymnastics will increase your daughter's flexibility.

Every gymnastics class begins with a warm-up that includes stretching and splits, and then throughout the rest of the class gymnasts learn and practice skills that require them to use their flexibility.

According to the [Mayo Clinic](#),

"Better flexibility may improve your performance in physical activities or decrease your risk of injuries by helping your joints move through their full range of motion and enabling your muscles to work most effectively."

So, better flexibility will decrease the risk of your daughter getting injured from gymnastics or any other physical activity she does.

3. Gymnastics will help to strengthen your daughter's bones.

Children's bones become stronger and denser when they participate in weight-bearing activities. In gymnastics, children work against gravity with the force of their own weight. According to the Physicians Committee for

Responsible Medicine's [Parent's Guide to Building Better Bones](#), making sure your child is engaging in any type of physical activity, but especially weight-bearing exercise, may be the most important thing you can do to promote their bone health.

In that same article they reference studies done on teenagers that have concluded that bone health as adults is related to the physical activity level of the teenagers earlier in life, not the amount of milk or calcium they have consumed. Surprising, right? Growing up my mom always told me that if I drank my milk I would have strong bones. Turns out she was doing the right thing for me anyways by enrolling me in gymnastics classes when I was a toddler.

Making sure your daughter grows healthy bones now will help her stay healthy later in life. In a study of women 45 years and older, those women that exercised at least four times a week as teenagers were one-fourth as likely to fracture a hip in their older age, as those that exercised less. So, making sure your daughter is active throughout her childhood will help keep her healthy long after she is out of your house.

4. Gymnastics will keep her fit and help her develop the habit of staying active.

We know that young people need to be more active and fit. It's such a problem in our country that First Lady Michelle Obama formed the [Let's Move](#) program to try to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity.

According to the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition's [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), America's youth is less active than ever before. Children and adolescents between the age of 6 and 17 should get 60 minutes or more of physical activity a day. And as part of their 60 minutes of physical activity a day, they should include muscle and bone strengthening activities at least three days a week.

Gymnastics is one of the most diverse sports in terms of the types of exercises and muscles it develops. Gymnastics works to enhance a gymnast's strength, flexibility, speed, balance and coordination. For example, the vault develops speed and power, bars is an endurance event and beam improves a gymnast's flexibility and balance.

Having this flexibility and strength (especially core strength) skill set base as a teenager will prepare girls for yoga, pilates and other cardio exercise classes as young adults. Knowing they can take exercise classes like this without excessively struggling will help them maintain their healthy exercise habits while working or going to school.

5. Gymnastics will make your daughter a well-rounded athlete, and teach her skills that will enhance other sports.

Gymnasts are flexible, agile and strong, with coordination, balance and flexibility. These are important traits in gymnastics and in other sports. For example, learning how to run fast for the vault would be important in not only track and field, but soccer, basketball, rugby and softball.

Balance and flexibility are useful if she ever wants to join a dance team. And gymnastics skills such as tumbling skills and jumps are an important part of cheerleading.

Wouldn't it be great if when your daughter's in high-school or middle school and she wants to try out for the cheerleading team, she had a decent shot?

Taking gymnastics classes as a young girl will teach her skills that will help her participate in gymnastics, cheerleading or other sports if she wants to.

6. Gymnastics will teach your daughter balance.

What better tool for learning balance than the balance beam? Learning to walk on a low beam first and then a high beam will teach balance at a young age. And this balance will help your gymnast learn how to ride a bike. Gymnasts

learn to not only balance on their feet, but on their hands. A handstand is the ultimate balance skill, learning to control your body in order to hold yourself up on your hands.

7. Gymnastics will teach your daughter to fall, helping to prevent her from getting injured in other sports or activities later in life.

One of the first things on the agenda in any beginner gymnastics class is to learn how to fall safely. When I taught gymnastics we spent time in each gymnastics class for the first 9 weeks of the year learning how to safely fall on each of the events.

You want to fall trying to minimize impact and absorb shock, while protecting your head. Falling and putting your arms behind you is one of the first things gymnasts are taught not to do, as this is an easy way to break your arms. It's easier and safer to learn how to fall correctly in a gymnastics gym because of the many mats and foam pits to use when doing falling drills. Learning how to fall young will become instinctual and protect her from unnecessary injuries later in life.

8. Gymnastics will help her develop hand-eye and foot-eye coordination.

Kids aren't just born with good body awareness and hand-eye, foot-eye coordination. Gymnastics is a great way for kids to learn how to make their body do what their brain is telling them to. Crawling through the pit, swinging from the bars, jumping on the trampoline, learning how to roll on floor mats—all of these exercises help kids learn how to move their body.

9. Gymnastics will help teach her to follow directions.

As soon as your gymnast is enrolled in a preschool gymnastics class she will start learning how to follow directions with obstacle courses. The instructor will explain what to do at each station, and she will have to remember what to do in order to participate. And since it's fun, she will want to remember, and her listening and "following directions" skills will start to form.

When she is older she will be motivated to follow directions when she is eager to learn a new skill. She will have to listen to her coach's instruction in order to improve.

10. Gymnastics will help her excel in school.

According to Dr. Robyn Silverman, PhD. in "[Why Gymnastics is Great for Kids](#)" from USA Gymnastics,

"Research suggests that there is a strong correlation between physically fit children and academic achievement. This means that every time you send your child to gymnastics class, they're getting an opportunity to engage in physical exercise that encourages healthy brain function. Nerve cells multiply and connections in the brain are strengthened. It is not surprising that children who are engaging in consistent physical activity like gymnastics are more likely to get better grades than their inactive peers."

And if you look at a college setting, in a list of the top 20 NCAA college gymnastics teams (from the same "Why Gymnastics is Great for Kids" article), each of the college gymnastics teams in the top 20 has an average GPA above a 3.2. That's pretty impressive at the college level!

Also according to the World Health Organization's [Girls Participation in Physical Activities and Sports: Benefits, Patterns, Influences and Ways Forward](#):

"[G]irls who participate in sports are more likely to achieve academic success than those who do not play sports; female high school athletes expressed a greater interest in graduating from both high school and college"

11. Gymnastics will teach her perseverance and patience, and how to set and achieve goals.

Since gymnastics is a hard sport and most skills take lots of [repetition](#) to learn, she will start learning that patience and perseverance are necessary in life to achieve goals.

In order to learn new gymnastics skills she will have to focus on the goal of the skill and the practice and steps it takes to reach it.

12. Gymnastics will teach her mental toughness

Gymnastics is largely an individual sport so each gymnast has to develop their own mental toughness. They develop mental toughness when it takes a long time to learn a skill they are working on, or when they have a bad meet and have to face bad scores.

You never know when your daughter will need to rely on the mental toughness she learns in gymnastics to get her through rough times in life. Shannon Miller, the most decorated American gymnast, had to rely on that mental toughness when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2010.

Here is what she said to Oklahoma's News 9 in this article, [Edmond Native, Olympic Champion Shannon Miller Talks About New Memoir](#):

“When I found out I had to do chemotherapy, I had to push out all those negative thoughts. I reverted back to my days in the gym and said “I’m going to fight. Forget all this. I’m going to fight and I’m going to do everything I can.”

Unfortunately there are always going to be battles in life, and we should make sure kids grow up and have mental strength to fight them.

13. Gymnastics will help her make friends in a safe environment.

Gymnastics classes tend to have small class sizes, usually between 6-9 girls of about the same age per instructor. The small class size of girls of the same age will help her make friends in a safe and supervised environment.

Another benefit to her making friends in gymnastics class or on a gymnastics team is that studies have shown that while there is a steady decline in physical activity levels in girls starting from 6 years old until adolescence, studies suggest that a key factor in girls continuing to engage in physical activities was whether or not they had another girl to participate with (World Health Organization's [Girls Participation in Physical Activities and Sports: Benefits, Patterns, Influences and Ways Forward](#)). So making friends in gymnastics might be one way to keep your daughter fit and active through high-school.

My sister was a level 9 gymnast when she graduated from high school. She went on to compete on a college club and has now been graduated from college and working for several years. Her best friends in life are still the friends she made doing gymnastics throughout middle school and high school.

14. Gymnastics gives smaller children the opportunity to excel in sports.

Many sports, such as softball, basketball and soccer are biased towards tall and or big athletes. Gymnastics is a sport where small and or light athletes can be very competitive.

But that's not to say that you must be either short or tall to be successful in gymnastics. Mary Lou Retton, a member of the US 1984 Olympic gymnastics team, is only 4 feet 9 inches tall and Svetlana Khorkina, a member of the 1996, 2000, and 2004 Russian Olympic teams is 5 feet 5 inches tall.

15. Gymnastics will help her to have higher self-esteem than other girls her age.

In a study done on members of the women's senior national Olympic team, it was found that the gymnasts had higher self-esteem when compared to other members from different sports of the senior national team (USA Gymnastics' [Why Gymnastics](#) article).

This might be because the gymnasts on the Olympic team grew up in a safe environment with other ambitious, confident, encouraging girls.

16. Gymnastics will teach her the power of repetition.

The [power of repetition](#) is an important lesson in life. Let me tell you what I'm talking about with a story my mom always tells me when I complain about not being able to do something.

She tells me how when I was in second grade I had just started gymnastics and my gym was having a cartwheel-athon. They had challenged everyone to do 1,000 cartwheels. I came home on a Friday afternoon determined to do all 1,000 cartwheels that weekend. When I started out doing the cartwheels, my mom said they weren't very good and could barely be recognized as a cartwheel. I was just putting my hands on the ground and kicking my legs around the side. By Saturday and cartwheel number 500, my mom says she was shocked by how much better they looked. They weren't perfect, but I was kicking my legs over my head and they definitely looked like a cartwheel. My mom says that by Sunday night, and the 1,000th cartwheel, I was doing a beautiful cartwheel. My legs were going right over my head with straight legs and pointed toes. After practicing all weekend, and doing 1,000 cartwheels, I had mastered the skill.

This is the power of repetition. It's useful in so many different areas of life. And gymnastics teaches it to you.

17. Gymnastics can be started young.

As soon as kids are walking they can enroll in a parent-toddler gymnastics class. They can learn skills that improve coordination and balance with you guiding them. And these skills can be practiced more when you're at home.

Starting gymnastics young will help to set her on a healthy, physically active path in life.

Gymnastics classes are great for toddlers, or kids of any age because of all these physical and mental benefits. I know my sister and I wouldn't be the women we are today, women that have good jobs and work hard to stay healthy, without gymnastics.