

Nine Myths About Recreational Gymnastics Busted!

- **My child isn't very coordinated so she should not do gymnastics.** (You could also substitute strong or flexible for coordinated.) All the more reason your child should do gymnastics! Gymnastics works on those fundamental gross motor skills that all children need to develop to become physically fit.

- **If my child isn't going to be on team, she shouldn't waste her time doing gymnastics.** Not so. Gymnastics is a wonderful activity in and of itself. In addition to the physical benefits of the sport, gymnastics offers all sorts of life lessons, character building opportunities and the chance to meet new friends. And, perhaps most importantly for the child participating, it's fun!

There isn't much my child can get from a once a week class. The [APA recommends](#) that all children get at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity. So, on gymnastics day, that is taken care of for you! In addition, the basic fitness skills your children will learn make it considerably more likely that they continue to participate in other sports and physical activities on their days away from the gym. In addition, the life lessons of preserving and having self-discipline are part of any gymnastics lesson. Also, you are welcome to enroll in a second day!

- **My child is going to be too tall for gymnastics.** While it is true that most elite level gymnasts are quite petite, certainly not all are. And, for the level of gymnastics that most children who participate achieve, height is not a major limiting factor in their ability to progress. If your child is interested in gymnastics or is enrolled and having a good time, that's what matters! (And this is being written by a former gymnast who stands at 5'8"!)

- **I don't want gymnastics to stunt my child's growth.** It won't! As mentioned, most high-level gymnasts are quite short. However it is likely because smaller, lighter people have an easier time doing high-level gymnastics and therefore succeed at a greater rate than their taller teammates. In other words, it isn't gymnastics that makes them short, it's them being short allows them to succeed at elite level gymnastics. Additionally, it isn't until gymnasts are on an elite training track (30 plus hours a week) that delays in puberty or normal growth curves are of concern. A couple hours a week of gymnastics will have no effect on your child's growth. It will, however, have a positive effect preventing obesity, strengthening bones and encouraging a lifetime of fitness.

Gymnastics is too dangerous! Gymnastics coaches have much more training than most other sports coaches, having to pass safety tests, first aid tests and proficiency tests for teaching. They are considerably more knowledgeable than the average youth sports coach on topics such as injury prevention, conditioning and proper rehabilitation. Furthermore, many of the injuries in gymnastics are repetitive stress injuries due to over training. A gymnast taking a class once or twice a week is highly unlikely to develop such an injury. Finally, most [gymnastics related injuries](#) don't take place under at a gymnastics club, rather they happened at home! Gymnastics when practiced at a well-equipped club with safety certified, professional coaches who follow a safe, logical and developmentally appropriate lesson plan is quite safe.

I have a son, and gymnastics is a girls' sport. [Gymnastics is for boys too!](#) It is the basis of all sports. There is no better cross training sport than gymnastics as it develops strength, agility and coordination. The flexibility gained, learning how to fall and kinesthetic awareness helps prevent injury. Finally, gymnastics helps kids take coaching feedback, a valuable skill for sports and life.

Gymnastics interferes with schoolwork causing poor academic performance. To the contrary. There are [multiple studies](#) that suggest that children who are physically fit perform better in the classroom and that gymnastics specifically may [boost reading scores](#).

My child is too old to start gymnastics. Please don't say that! It's incredibly sad that as a society we tell kids as young as eight or nine that they are "too old" to start a sport. Even if you have a pre-teen or teenager who is interested in beginning gymnastics, it's not "too late." Yes, it may require finding a club with classes geared to older beginners, but they are out there. Let's not quash a child's interest in trying something new that is has [so many benefits](#) and is so much fun