



SHOULD ATHLETES WAIT UNTIL THEIR 13TH BIRTHDAY TO TRAIN?

The mindset of most people is yes, but the opposite is true. Research has shown that younger athletes (ages 6-12) are prime candidates to improve many aspects of fitness, especially coordination. This is not to say you should throw your kid in the basement with a Weider Weight Set and tell him to get cracking, but rather a progressive approach to overall general physical preparation is key.

5 Reasons Youth Athletes Need Athletic Development Training

By Vince Gabriele, MS

- 1) Sensitive Periods** - This is the window when a child's nervous system is like a sponge and with purposeful practice will get better at many athletic skills faster and more efficiently than at any other time in their lives.
- 2) Sports are not enough to improve athletic development** - Although we encourage kids to play multiple sports, most sports have a less than optimal general athletic skills development time period. Practices are usually 2-3 times per week and some sports have even less as the season progresses. The key to athletic development is purposeful practice of all general athletic skills over and over until it becomes hammered into their nervous system. Most youth sports do not provide this.
- 3) Fitness** - Training at young ages helps to start a life that has fitness as a part of it. This, in turn, will help prevent against obesity later in life and lights the ignition for self discipline, fitness and nutrition. This is important even for kids that do not play sports. Fitness needs to be a part of everyone's life, as the body was built to move.
- 4) Increase in confidence level** - Athletic Development Training will help youngsters get stronger, perform better at their sports and have more confidence. The satisfaction of doing your first good push-up or chin-up or learning how to sprint faster will do wonders for the confidence of youngsters. This confidence should spread to life skills and academics along with performance in sports.
- 5) Injury Prevention** - A stronger, more coordinated, more physically prepared athlete will get injured less often than an untrained athlete. This is not attained by just practicing and playing in games. Athletes need a training stimulus to prepare them for the field.

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