

Name: _____

Directions: Read the article below and answer the questions completely at the end in the spaces provided.

Kids'n The Gym?

Strength training for children, once wrongly assumed of stunting growth, is enjoying a recent reversal of fortune among fitness and health authorities, such as the American Academy of Pediatricians and the American College of Sports Medicine, who now cite a number of potential benefits.

- Properly supervised, resistance training appears to help children build strong bones, enhance coordination, improve athletic performance and develop self-confidence, leading to a healthy change in lifestyle.
- A good fitness alternative for kids who don't enjoy team sports, or whose weight may embarrass and inhibit them, strength training actually favors bigger children who are generally stronger than their slimmer peers.
- "Sedentary children who tend to spend their time reading and watching TV could really benefit from weight training. Because resistance training is so structured, non-competitive and often shows significant, individual progress, it can appeal to a child who otherwise wants to avoid competitive activities like sports," says Barbara Brehm, professor of exercise and sports studies at Smith College.
- Studies suggest that while children under 12 can safely participate in resistance training activities, they're unlikely to demonstrate sustained interest. "Children in this age group who are active by nature don't need weight training," says Dr. Brehm. "They'll naturally use their muscles as they participate in games and play."

Guidelines To Help Your Children Train Safely:

- * A thorough medical examination by a doctor is essential before beginning a weight training program. Children aged 12 to 14 are at an ideal age to start a light regimen.
 - Children must be supervised at all times by a trained instructor.
 - Children should first focus on technique using equipment with no resistance. Once good form is attained, add low weight. Kids should be able to comfortably do one or two sets of 12 to 15 reps. Heavy weights can cause injury to long bones and growth plates (growing tissue near end of long bones).
- * Insist on proper warm-up, cool down, breathing and rest and recovery intervals. Two or three, 20-minute sessions a week are fine. Cut back if your child experiences joint pain or muscle strain.
- * Children shouldn't lift over their heads or put pressure on their spines. No bench or shoulder presses.
- * Light free weights, push-ups, sit-ups, squats, medicine balls, balance boards and stability balls offer excellent resistance-based exercise opportunities.

Answer the following questions completely in the spaces provided. (Each question is worth 2 points)

1. Why does weight training appeal to children who want to avoid competitive activities like sports?

2. Why will kids under 12 years of age NOT show continual interest in weight training?

3. Name 2 exercises or fitness equipment that can be used to offer excellent resistance-based exercise opportunities.

4. State one guideline to help children train safely. Then write an example of the opposite of that guideline? (i.e. write what would be unsafe?)
