

# Helen to the Rescue

## *The golden age of playing*

By **Helen Pufahl MS**, NASM-CPT Resident Contributor



Did you know that if you grew up in the '70s and '80s you enjoyed more than 2 hours of outside play each weekday, and 9 hours at weekends - whatever the weather! Today's youth (18 and younger) venture outside for just over an hour each weekday, and fewer than 5 hours on Saturdays and Sundays. It is alarming the extent today's children are missing out on the outdoor playtime which we enjoyed as children. Playing outdoors is so important for children

- not only to help them stay active and healthy but also to socialize with friends - and create those treasured childhood memories we look back on so fondly.

"Children around the world are less aerobically fit than their parents were as kids, a decline that researchers say could be setting them up for serious health problems once they're grown-up" (Daley, 2013). Only one in four kids get the recommended 60 minutes of exercise a day. One in five kids under age 18 currently meet the criteria for obesity and the percentage is expected to grow.



It's not just the physical health that suffers when kids are too sedentary, so does a child's mental well-being. Kids that are physically fit get better grades and achieve more academically. Plus, the physical fitness of kids and the sports they play build self-esteem and confidence that help them in all aspects of daily life.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that kids over the age of 6 get an hour of moderate to high-intensity exercise daily. Children (pre-puberty) need aerobic exercise and high-impact exercise for bone health. Strength training limited until post-puberty under the supervision of a qualified trainer, can improve strength and help prevent sports injuries.

**Although today's kids may be juggling a lot of interests and responsibilities, family can help make fitness a part of daily life.**

- Push those kids off the couch
- Encourage your kids to try different sports
- Exercise together as a family.
- Limit computer and television time
- Be a role model. Kids that see their parents exercising are more likely to do it themselves.
- If it's safe and they're old enough, encourage them to walk to school.
- Encourage children to do active chores - walk the dog, rake the leaves, run the lawnmower, etc. once they're old enough.
- Get pedometers for everyone in the family to wear and see who racks up the most miles each week.

Enjoy a little friendly competition!

Fit kids=Fit Teens=Fit adults  
Yours in Fitness,  
Helen



**Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics, as well as, track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant, and Senior fitness specialist. Owner: Unique Health & Fitness**

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