

Gymnastics is a Great Foundation for Many Sports

The skills learned in gymnastics require flexibility, strength, coordination, and much more. These lessons provide a strong foundation for many other sports such as basketball, soccer, swimming, baseball, football, and running.

Jumping: Gymnastics requires participants to jump! There are skills on every apparatus that require a child to jump. Jumping can be done forward, backward, and sideways, while twisting, and even upside down.

Running: Gymnastics teaches children to run. Children must run full speed and then change the energy into a round off, a cartwheel, or a jump. Many sports require running. In basketball, children must also run and then convert the run to a jump.

Balance: Gymnastics teaches good balance. Balance beam is an entire event devoted to balance. In basketball and soccer, children must have good balance to dribble the ball, run, and change directions quickly.

Coordination: Gymnastics teaches coordination. Gymnastics skills teach children to move various body parts in different ways, at different times, and in the correct sequence very quickly. This is helpful when a child is learning to dribble a ball, run, avoid an opponent, and then shoot the ball.

Flexibility: Gymnastics helps children become more flexible. Many skills challenge a child to move her muscles to the limit. Swimming likewise requires a child to have a good range of motion in his arms to make the most of his stroke.

Strength: Gymnastics builds strong muscles. While doing gymnastics, a child must support his body in many different ways. He may be hanging or swinging from the bars. He may be holding himself up with his hands in a handstand on the rings. He may be balancing his whole body weight on only his gluteus maximus. Most skills will help children build muscles that are also important for him to use in a variety of sports.

Quickness: Gymnastics teaches children to move quickly. When you think about it, gymnastics is really a series of controlled FALLS! A child must move quickly or she will not land properly. Quickness is valuable in football, soccer, basketball, running, and swimming.

Perseverance: Children must try most new skills repeatedly before skills are mastered. Cartwheels can take months or years (for younger children) to master. Learning that repetition can bring success is useful because most children will need much practice to master the throwing skills required in baseball and football and the dribbling required in soccer and basketball.

Body Awareness: Children must learn how to move their body to successfully complete a skill. Gymnastics teaches children to control many parts of their bodies at the same time to perform a skill. Having good body awareness is helpful in throwing skills, since during a throw, a child must move his feet, hands, arms, hips, etc.,- all in the correct sequence!