

Youth Fitness



Is strength training safe for kids?

It has been previously thought that youth should not strength train due to possible injuries to the musculoskeletal system. The American Academy of Pediatrics however, has issued a position statement announcing that resistance training of sub-maximal loads can be beneficial. Lifting to max is discouraged until the late teens (16-19). Weight lifting such as Olympic and power lifting (maximal lifting) is not the goal of the the Nampa Recreation Center's (NRC) youth fitness programs. Our goal is to educate kids about a balanced and safe program and provide a fun atmosphere to encourage healthy lifelong habits and provide the many benefits associated with an adult strength-training program. Still, kids are prone to injuries of the growth plates (epiphyseal). The epiphyseal plates, located at the ends of the long bones have not ossified (hardened), and are prone to injury when excessive stress is applied either through improper strength training or with sporting activities. These plates are important for normal growth and development. Close adult supervision, proper instruction, appropriate program design, and careful selection of training equipment will greatly reduce the chance of injury. The following guidelines will help assure a safe and mentally satisfying experience:

1. Qualified adult instructor (usually not a parent) that is knowledgeable about proper strength training for kids and a low instructor-to-student ratio.
2. Noncompetitive atmosphere where the emphasis is on safety and fun.
3. Kids must be old enough to listen to and follow directions as well as having the balance and coordination necessary to perform the motor skills being taught. They should also have the desire themselves to participate.
4. Strength training should be a part of a well-balanced program that also includes cardiovascular and flexibility training.
5. Programs should be simple with the focus on correct technique, full range of motion, and consist of a weight that can be lifted 10-15 times.
6. Training may need to be modified to include more stretching during growth spurts as many adolescents experience weakening of the bones, muscle imbalances, and tightness in muscles and tendons stretched by growing bones.
7. Equipment should be modified to fit the size of the child and allow for small (5%) increases in load.

Sources: "Strength Training for Children" by Rachel E. Picone, B.S., "Is Strength Training Good For Kids?" by Barbara A. Brehm, Ed. D, The National Strength and Conditioning Association and The American Academy of Pediatric Statements.

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Training Guidelines

15 years of age

- ♦use of entire weight room and all functional training equipment

13-14 years of age-weight room

- ♦use of entire weight room (except for restricted exercises*) with completion of NRC Youth Strength Training Class
- ♦register for monthly class at program desk

10-14 years of age-zone fitness area

- ♦use of zone area with completion of scheduled orientation
- ♦participant carries zone chart with them throughout entire workout

10-14 years of age-functional training

- ♦use of functional training equipment (trainer's discretion) with completion of scheduled orientation
- ♦participant carries functional training chart with them throughout entire workout
- ♦new exercises require trainer's pre-approval

6-9 years of age

- ♦use of functional training equipment (trainer's discretion) with completion of scheduled orientation
- ♦parent or guardian attends orientation
- ♦direct adult supervision (parent or guardian) during entire workout
- ♦participant carries functional training chart with them throughout entire workout
- ♦new exercises require trainer's pre-approval

- ♦**Complete 10-15 reps (less than 10 reps means the weight is too heavy)**
- ♦**Increase resistance slowly (5% increase is ideal) and only increase resistance after completing 2-3 workouts of at least 15 reps**
- ♦**Strength train 2-3 days per week with at least 1 day of rest between workouts**
- ♦**Perform cardiovascular exercises, stretching or other fun activities on off days**
- ♦**Follow all fitness etiquette and NRC policies**
- ♦**Privileges may be revoked if any of the above guidelines are not followed**

*Even with the completion of the YST program, students will not be allowed to participate in the type of exercises listed for purposes of bone health and general safety.

- Barbell squats
- Kettlebell dynamic exercises ie; swings, cleans, snatch
- Olympic dynamic exercises ie; snatch, clean etc.
- Behind the neck exercises ie; pull-downs, presses
- Bench press and squats extending beyond 90-degree joint angle
- Power lifting exercises ie; deadlifts, max or low rep ranges
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Pledge and Informed Consent

I have read and understand "Is Strength Training Safe for Kids" and Nampa Recreation Center's Youth Fitness Training Guidelines. I am aware that the emphasis of strength training for youth (the zone area and functional training) at the NRC is that of safety and fun.

In signing this form, I permit my child to participate in the NRC's zone area and/or functional training program. I affirm that I have read the mentioned material and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that if at anytime my child is not following fitness etiquette and NRC policies that their privilege may be revoked.

I also agree that at the end of the orientation, my child will assume the risks of such exercises. I hold harmless the NRC and all staff members conducting this program regarding any and all claims, suits, losses, or related causes of action for damages which may occur from their injury or death, accidental or otherwise, during or arising in any way from attendance and subsequent completion of this program.

Parent Name(print)_____

Signature_____ Date ____ / ____ / ____