

Is it okay for my child to participate in resistance training?

Numerous position statements from leading authorities in the world endorse resistance training as a safe and effective means of physical training for children and adolescents. A wealth of research shows that when performed correctly and delivered by qualified professionals, resistance training leads to a range of benefits for young athletes; ultimately helping them to perform better in sport and physical activity, be less prone to injury, and enjoy a range of health benefits.

Potential benefits of resistance training for young athletes

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Improves muscular strength and power✓ Improves local muscle endurance✓ Improves bone mineral density✓ Reduces skeletal fracture risk✓ Reduces adiposity (especially in overweight youth) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Improves endurance capacity✓ Decreases cardiovascular health risk✓ Improves motor skill competence✓ Improves self-confidence✓ Reduces risk of sport- and physical activity-related injury |
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There is no evidence to support the notion that resistance training causes injury to growth cartilage or stunts the growth of children and adolescents.

Most of the forces young people are exposed to during sports training or competition are likely to be far greater than those that can be experienced from resistance training.

Physical training during the early years should focus on the development of **motor skills** and the basic levels of **muscular strength**. The reason for this is that regardless of the sport or event your child participates in, they will be required to both **produce** force (e.g. jumping) and **absorb** high amounts of force (e.g. landing). Young athletes require strong and robust bodies (*muscular strength*) which move in a technically correct and fluent manner (*motor skills*) when faced with any physical challenge. Strong and technically able athletes will be better placed to express power, speed and agility safely, while also being more economical in their movement across a range of sports.

Based on:

Lloyd, R.S. et al. (2014). Position statement on youth resistance training: the 2014 international consensus. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 48, 498-505