

# ***Physical fitness training leads to improved mood, self-concept, and scholastic performance.***

Children should get an average of one hour of physical activity three times a week to ward off poor health and keep them fit and active. Added to the commonly acknowledged benefits to physical activity, physical exercise is starting to show recognized correlations with increased academic performance in school, as a result of lowered stress levels, heightened self-esteem, self-confidence and a greater sense of belonging.

Here is a list of potential benefits that can be gained from structured sporting and physical exercise in your child's regular routine.

## **Improved Focus and Concentration**



According to leading sport academics, a person who moves well is also likely to perform well in school, as increased blood flow brings more fresh oxygen to the brain, which fuels it! Sports can improve a child's mind and body connection, since he or she will need to train the mind to help the body to react quickly and accurately on the sports field. With regular physical exercise and repetition of certain physical activities, we experience reinforcement of the neural pathways (our brain's information pathways, roads and highways). This means that while we are training our body to develop faster and have more accurate muscle control, we are training our brain as well by focusing it on goals and targets!

## **Team spirit translates into better interpersonal relationships**

Team sports allow children to develop camaraderie, friendship and connectedness in the schooling environment, which is essentially a micro-society, which prepares them for their entrance into the adult world. Children, who feel part of a team and are accepted by others, will experience less anxiety, stress and social phobia. Being accepted and successful in a team has a huge impact on self-esteem and self-confidence.

## **Increased activity means better rest!**

With increased physical activity, the body and mind are more likely to experience quality rest and rejuvenating sleep. We all know that when we have had a proper night's sleep, our mental stamina is that much greater. On top of this, when the body feels rested, the mind feels fresh and ready to deal with the stressors of the average day at school.

## **Physical exercise and neurotransmitters**

Neurotransmitters are chemicals within our brain that help our brain to communicate between its different parts and as a result with the rest of the body. Certain chemicals, such as serotonin, are responsible for our mood levels. High levels elevate moods (such as happiness) while low levels are associated with depression. Physical exercise increases levels of serotonin, which makes us feel good about ourselves and our experiences.

It has been shown that physical activity can even lower the symptoms of ADD/ADHD such as hyperactivity and impulsivity, distractibility and inattention.

As you can see it is extremely important to train the body from an early age on and keep at it. A holistic approach to wellness will lead to the desired affects of feeling, behaving and functioning optimally. Make sure that you and your children exercise enough, eat healthily and sleep well. To enhance brain health and ideal functioning it is not always necessary to take medication. Nowadays there are a number of alternatives to choose from such as Neurofeedback training, which trains the brain in a similar way as physical exercise trains the body. Neurofeedback or brain training strengthens the brain and allows new, optimal pathways to form. This is often sufficient to help you concentrate better, feel de-stressed, less anxious or **depressed** and to sleep better.

For more information and tips on how to train your brain visit:  
[www.eq-advantagedge.co.za](http://www.eq-advantagedge.co.za)

