



FITNESS FOR LIFE

Today's kids are so different from when I was a kid growing up in Milton, Ma. Physical Education in school was never questioned. In elementary school we had recess and lunchtime to play sports and Gym everyday. We would go home after school and play freeze tag or capture the flag. Most of us were active all day.

When Middle School rolled around we had gym 3 days a week. Soccer, Field Hockey, Baseball and Gymnastics were some of the activities we had exposure to. By the time we got to High School we were ready for Gym 5 days a week. More activities were made available to us. Running around the school was a daily warm up and a challenge. We did it and it probably paid off at least for some of us. Gameboys and computers were not even around when I was growing up and TV was a privilege earned and watched for 1 hour before bed only after homework was done. As a kid, I kept myself busy. I didn't need electronics to do it for me.

Unfortunately today's kids don't have as much exposure to GYM classes as I did. My boy's have Gym once or twice a week depending on the school schedule. Fortunately for me, my kids live for the outdoors and sports so I don't worry so much. However, there are a lot of kids that, out side of school, do nothing. They come home from school and sit in front of the TV, Computer or Video Game console. In most High Schools these days, Gym is not an everyday occurrence. Again, kids have 2 or 3 days per week of phys. ed. Some kids play sports or dance or do gymnastics, but still, most do nothing. The end result is overweight kids that mature into overweight adults.

My solution to this problem has to start with the Parents!

Please, **PARENTS**, make sure your kids are active. Sign them up for fit kids, gymnastics, dance, soccer, etc.... If you think your kids aren't getting the physical activity that they absolutely need, then find some outside influences to help them understand how important it is for their future! This, coupled with what they receive in school will help them become healthy and active adults. Don't let them sit around all day watching TV or playing video games. I'm a father of 3 and I know it's not easy and that work sometimes gets in the way, but if **YOU** make the time for this, your kids will too!

Another important aspect of keeping your kids fit is to teach them to EAT RIGHT!

It's amazing the foods that kids eat these days and they actually think it's nutritious. I ask my kids what their friends bring for snack and lunch. The answers I get are scary. Cookies and candy bars, rice krispy treats, fruit rolls, make your own pizza on a cracker etc... Don't get me wrong, **not all** kids eat these things and there's nothing wrong with these foods, in moderation. What happened to the days of tuna, turkey or egg salad sandwiches, an apple or banana and some wheat thins? Are these foods of the past? Well, I'm hoping to make them part of our children's future. The amount of fat grams that today's kids are consuming is dangerously high. Not to mention the sugar grams

(which then turns into fat). If this trend continues, our kids will grow up having to deal with weight issues, poor nutritional habits, and generally unhealthy lifestyles.

SO PARENTS....

Please try to learn more about the important aspects of healthy eating for your children's sake as well as your own. There is plenty of literature available both online and in the bookstores. Use common sense when reading food labels. If it's high in fat, contains no fiber or protein, then it's not a good food choice. Encourage your children to eat more fruits and vegetables. Also, try to keep your kids be as active as possible. Encourage them to play outside. When they can't, try twister or Fit Deck Jr. (www.fitdeck.com). Most importantly, DO IT WITH THEM!!! Show them that you care about yourself and them by being active too!

For more information try these links;

www.kidshealth.org

www.learntobehealthy.org