****Benefits of Being a Gymnast

\* The Benefits of Recreational Gymnastics \*

After the 2012 Olympics, many households were filled with children who were determined to be the next Mckayla Maroney, Gabby Douglas, Danell Leyva, and Jake Dalton. Outside of being able to make a Maroney Pony, a quirky face, or cheer with the enthusiasm of Leyva’s father, many parents were not sure where to start. What many parents do not realize is that outside of the competitive gymnastic track, there is a whole world of recreational gymnastics that not only gets kids up and moving, but also supports young athletes in any sport they choose to peruse.

According to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the minimum daily activity level for a toddler is 45 minutes (planned physical activity) and 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity. Preschool aged children should be getting 60 minutes of a planned physical activity as well as 60 minutes of unstructured play, and school aged children should be getting a minimum of one hour per day of physical activity. Through recreational gymnastics kids can get up and moving, have fun, and learn skills that will benefit them both physically and mentally.

**You might ask yourself, “Why gymnastics? What benefit does it have when my child wants to play soccer, football, or just go outside and ride their bike?” Here are just a few of the benefits that gymnastics holds for our youth:
\* Strength \* Flexibility \* Balance \* Social Skills \*
And Much More…

Strength
In gymnastics, a majority of exercises are based on student’s building muscle using their own weight as resistance. This leads to leaner, more toned muscles throughout the entire body. Strong muscles built through recreational gymnastics can aide in a powerful football tackle, a stronger soccer kick, and a strong throwing arm.

Flexibility
 Yes, when we think of flexibility within the gymnastics world we often think of splits, twisting in the air, and being able to bend backwards on command. What flexibility through gymnastics also offers is less risk of injury in other sports. A football player who has flexibility is at less risk for sprains and muscle tears when they are tackled. A wrestler can use flexibility to help maneuver their opponent into a hold or use their flexibility to get out of a hold.

Balance
Balance can aide children in any sport. For children who love to play outside on bikes, scooters, and skateboards, balance allows them to have better control. For children who dance, balance can help with poses, movements, and overall connection to the music.

Social Skills
 According to Livestrong.com, children who participate in gymnastics are better equipped to handle the physical and emotional challenges handed to them in life. Students are provided the opportunity to work in a group, communicate with adults, and communicate with children their own age. Another benefit is that students are taught critical social skills such as listening, following directions, turn taking, and respect for other.

At AcroBrats Gymnastics in Victorville, a variety of recreational gymnastics classes are offered. Starting as young as eighteen months, children can participate in a parent/child class. After age 3, children are offered a variety of independent recreational classes designed to promote body awareness, self-esteem, endurance, strengths, and flexibility. With access to scale down equipment for the youngest students and full sized equipment as they get older, AcroBrats Gymnastics recreational program has countless benefits for children of all ages and skill levels.