

JUNIOR SPORT

WITH GLYNIS NUNN (OAM)

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IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL LITERACY

Olympian Glynis Nunn has watched as each generation has become more inactive and explains why it needs to stop

IT is no surprise that my interest in sport and physical education is high.

Being raised on a farm and being active from a young age, sport and physical activity has always been a huge part of my life and that of my children.

Recently, a study in Perth has shown that the majority of Gen Z kids (born between 1997 and 2015) display a lack of physical and motor skills compared to previous generations.

These basic physical skills include balance, running, jumping, throwing and catching.

The study compared differences between kids of today, and their counterparts years ago.

These are all elements of physical literacy which, to me, are just as important as maths, English and the sciences.

Young children are losing opportunities to engage in active play where they are known to develop imaginative skills and various social skills. They also do not have the ability to investigate their risk-taking and know their own personal limitations to challenge themselves.

They are not getting the same exposure to these sort of play situations that people in the '40s and '50s had growing up.

Of course, this is my opinion, but many researchers are finding that young children are tending to lead a more sheltered upbringing. I would challenge anyone who disagrees with me.

In schools, activities such as gymnastics and some disciplines in

track and field are not covered any longer, which is really disappointing.

There are also many more strict rules around activities young children are able to be involved in during break times. The fear of injury and litigation is making it more difficult all the time for young, developing children to enjoy the freedom many of us Gen X's were lucky enough to experience.

Some time ago, the Education Department and many private schools felt it was more

“It's as important as maths and science.”

GLYNIS NUNN

important to teach young children the three “R's” – reading, writing and arithmetic, which limited physical education times for children in schools.

Looking at school playgrounds, many of the activities of yesteryear are not available due to the fear of students injuring themselves.

It is

becoming increasingly important to upskill sports coaches and PE teachers as this will build and promote a lasting culture that makes physical literacy just as much a priority as subjects like mathematics and science.



Olympian Glynis Nunn has opened up about the importance of physical literacy in children.



So, what is ‘physical literacy’? It is the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments.

Physical literacy is about developing the fundamental movement skills that all children need, such as running, hopping, throwing, hitting, catching and jumping.

This physical activity also improves academic performance, cognitive skills, mental health, psychological wellness, social skills, and healthy lifestyle habits.

Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

To be involved in sport at an

early age and have the basic fundamental movement patterns means you will ‘generally’ be an active adult. When we look at the benefits of being physically active they are too many to ignore.

These include:

- Improve your memory and brain function (all age groups);
- Protect against many chronic diseases;
- Aid in weight management;
- Lower blood pressure and improve heart health;
- Improve quality of sleep;
- Reduce feelings of anxiety and depression;
- Combat cancer related fatigue;
- Improve joint pain and stiffness;
- Maintain muscle strength and balance;
- Increase life span.

I think the above points speak for themselves – it is all

about our quality of life. We all need to encourage people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and race to become more involved in physical activity to gain the benefits.

The Academy is proud to be working with young developing athletes in many different elements of their life and sporting journeys and we hope to help them make wonderful life choices in the future.

Here are our upcoming programs:

Basketball. Initially, the clinic with Phil Smyth was set down for June 26 and 27, but there are some clashes with organised competitions that we were unaware of, so this clinic has now been changed and will run from July 31 to August 1. If you are interested, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Rugby League. In late July, the Academy is intending to

conduct an under-16 rugby program. We are currently confirming the coach and venue but will share this information with all clubs and players as soon as it is finalised. This program has run since 2009 and has a wonderful history of helping players develop and refine their skills to benefit their performance in representative teams.

Pony Club. The Academy is extremely excited to be able to offer an Equestrian program. Obviously without horses, the program will be held at RACV Royal Pines, one of our wonderful partners, and be held over two consecutive Saturdays.

The program will cover all aspects of physical preparation of horse and rider and expand on how to best prepare and recover for the demands of riding.



MEN MATTER RACEDAY

SATURDAY 26TH JUNE

Join us for a community raceday event that raises awareness, educates and fundraises for men's health.

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