

# The Smart Connection

Newsletter for Students, Parents, and Educators

**Smart Tutor Referrals**  
www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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## News & Announcements

### Welcome Back!

Are you ready to study? Have you set goals for your academic focus and achievement this year?

We're looking forward to helping to make this year a great one for students. Please contact us to discuss how private tutoring can be of benefit.

### Happy Birthday to Us!

Smart Tutor Referrals is celebrating 4 years of supporting students. We began as a tiny agency in 2002 and have grown to help hundreds and hundreds of students and families in Victoria. Hooray! Thank you for continuing to support this local, values-based business.

### Fall Workshops

#### ► Study Skills

*date: Saturday, October 21, 2006*

*time: 10:00 am - 12:30 pm*

*cost: \$40*

*ages: 14 years and over*

Are you satisfied with your current study habits and the results they bring? Interested in learning techniques to help you get organized, manage your time and memorize more? Learn the skills and how to apply them in this interactive workshop. Prepared students perform better!

#### ► Provincial Exam Prep

*date: Saturday, October 28, 2006*

*time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm*

*cost: \$65*

*ages: 15-18 years*

In this interactive workshop, students will learn how to: build exam confidence; prepare for exams; use memory techniques and write exams. If you know how to prepare for and write exams, your confidence and results will improve!

*For more information, or if you'd like to book a workshop for your school or private group, please contact us at 995-2632.*

## Sports Involvement Benefits School Performance

*by Dahlia Miller*

Sports bags, sweaty equipment, water bottles, early morning practices, and... homework? Does involvement in sports enhance school performance? The simple answer is yes, mostly.

You've heard the phrase, *healthy body, healthy mind*, right? Well, it's true, in more ways than one.

Simply put, on a biological level, aerobic exercise (i.e. exercise that gets the heart pumping hard for longer than 20 minutes) pulls more oxygen into the lungs. That means that during exercise, more oxygen is drawn into the blood and pumped through the body and brain. This oxygen-rich blood sweeps "tired" blood out from the brain, allowing the mind to function more effectively. Our bodies are complex machines that are kept in best condition with regular exercise. A healthy brain processes information more efficiently and memorizes with greater ease – obvious benefits for students.

*"The first wealth is health."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Another way that regular exercise contributes to a healthy mind is through the release of stress. Humans, as physical beings, interact with the world on a physical level. We often store stress in our muscles. Physical exercise gets those muscles moving and allows them to release tension. As humans, we also tend to store stress in our minds. Being active with sports or being on a sports team can help to take our minds off our troubles and let them go on the physical level (as mentioned above) or through connecting with others. A relaxed mind is more

open to learning new information and can think more clearly.

One terrific benefit of sports involvement is self-confidence. I've noticed that the students I speak to who are very active or on sports teams have a sense of self-awareness that isn't always easy to come by. They tend not to get caught up in the type of negative self-talk that can really hamper a student's performance. (Have you ever heard that voice that tells you that you haven't got a chance at passing the test that just got put in front of you? That negative self-talk can escalate and be quite debilitating to a student.) Students involved in sports are typically very good at setting reasonable goals, recognizing that goals are reached one step at a time, and cheering themselves on as they move toward their goals. These habits are extremely beneficial for students.

The discipline of regular sports practice often transfers quite nicely to schoolwork. Most sports players can recognize when they are focussed and when they aren't; they know that sports practice (like homework time) has time limits; and they are capable of pushing themselves. In the arena of schoolwork this often means sports players focus on homework when it's time to focus, don't let homework drag on all evening, and do their best to work through challenging material.

High self-esteem is another benefit of involvement in sports. Being active and strong, belonging to a team, and having positive mentors and coaches all contribute to positive self-esteem in young people, especially young teens.

## About Us

### Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

**Our tutors** are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

*We help students to achieve.*

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

[www.SmartTutorReferrals.com](http://www.SmartTutorReferrals.com)

## Contact Us

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Feeling good about themselves, these young people are often more comfortable asking questions in class, seeking help when they need it, studying or working with others and being realistic about their school performance (i.e. not feeling defeated after failing to reach unreasonable goals).

According to Pam Turner, owner of Elevation Empowerment Training in Victoria, and an authority on youth self-esteem, *"The more opportunities we can give teens to learn new skills and progress toward goals, the more their self-esteem will grow. Giving them opportunities to become involved in things and develop skills is a key. It could be learning a new sport, an art, a new academic subject, or life skill; the challenge is keeping them engaged and finding things that they can continue to be involved in."*

Of course we're talking about potential behaviors. Every student is different in his or her interest in and ability for schoolwork. Generally speaking, though, involvement in sports sets students up for success in many ways physically, mentally, and emotionally. Of course, they still may struggle and need support with actual course material, but they're quite likely to approach even this difficulty with a positive attitude.

## Some Possible Negative Effects of Sports Involvement

Like everything there are (at least) two sides to the story. While involvement in sports offers students many positive benefits, it can also create several potential problems for students.

The major issues students on sports teams seem to encounter relate to time.

Being on a sports team, or being heavily active with sports, requires a time commitment.

In the higher grades of high school, the homework load can also be quite demanding time-wise. This can put a strain on the student if he or she is not skilled with time management. Even students who manage their time well can end up feeling overloaded if their sports team travels often or the number of practices per week is quite high. If a student's schedule is too busy, it can be difficult to keep up with the challenges of course material and the pressures of exams.

Again, if there are too many practices per week, or the practices are early or late in the day, this can have a negative impact on a student. Students who are falling asleep over their homework are not working to their peak potential. This, in turn, can create pressure as the student strives (with less time) to maintain a desired grade level.

The pressure some students feel (from themselves and/or from their parents) to reach a certain grade level and a certain level of sports proficiency can also detract from the student's ability to perform in the classroom and on exams. This pressure can lead to added stress and lack of focus.

The goal with supporting students who are involved in sports is to cultivate the positive benefits while reducing the possible negative impacts.

So, keep your eyes and ears wide open when your child talks about his or her feelings regarding the impact sports is having on schoolwork. Be ready to offer more encouragement or to lessen the number of commitments if there are complaints.

Give your child and yourself many pats on the back for your dedication to building both a healthy body and healthy mind.