

Micah Raskin Discusses the Benefits of Swimming for Handicapped Children

Micah Raskin On the Benefits of Swimming for Handicapped Children

NASSAU COUNTY, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Micah Raskin](#) is a professional poker player and a long-time philanthropist based in Queens and Nassau Counties in New York. While his philanthropic interests and projects are broad, one of his favorite causes is swimming programs for children with special needs. Raskin helped build and fund programs that allow children with disabilities who live in inner-city New York to learn how to swim and experience aquatic playtime.

These weekly classes and open pool time allow the children to accustom themselves to the water in a safe, supervised, and understanding environment. According to Micah, the benefits of swimming go far beyond simple entertainment for children who are differently-abled. Studies from multiple sources have shown that swimming can decrease anxiety, improve motor function, reduce sensitivity, improve mood, and provide much-needed socialization.

Swimming activities and programs provide various benefits for different types of disabilities. Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Sensory Disorders, Visual Impairment, and Spina Bifida are just a few of the conditions whose symptoms can be aided by time in the water.

“Safety First,” Says Micah Raskin

The first, and possibly most important, benefit of swimming for children with disabilities is an increase in safety. Learning how to swim, [explains Micah Raskin](#), can prevent a child from drowning in an emergency situation. Whether you’re hiking near a lake, taking a boat ride, or visiting someone with a pool in their backyard, knowing how to swim saves lives.

According to The National Autism Association, “drowning is among the leading causes of death of individuals with autism.” In 2009 through 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91% of deaths reported in children with autism under the age of 14 in the United States. This is often because they have never learned to swim. When paired with the panic brought on by unfamiliar sensations, this lack of skill can result in drowning even in relatively shallow waters.

Swimming regularly - with proper supervision - can familiarize children with the water and give them confidence in their ability to swim and float should an accident occur. This is true for

children with all kinds of disabilities - not just those with autism.

Swimming Improves Lung and Heart Health

Swimming is an excellent form of cardiovascular exercise. All children need physical activity to stay strong and healthy, and swimming is an excellent option for children with mobility issues. The low-impact environment of the pool allows you to increase your heart rate, burn calories, and improve your lung capacity without putting undue stress on your body.

Proper cardiovascular health impacts every other area of your physical health because it improves both blood flow and oxygenation levels - both of which are linked to increased cognitive function, serotonin production, and overall longevity.

Swimming Helps Children With Disabilities Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity rates in children with disabilities are almost 38% higher than in their typically-abled peers, according to the President's Council on Health, Fitness, and Nutrition. This danger to their health only increases as they get older, says Micah Raskin. And the statistics show that obesity rates in adults with disabilities are almost 57% higher than in the average adult population.

Swimming burns calories - around 223 calories per hour while treading water - without putting too much stress on your body. This makes swimming an excellent activity for those with mobility issues, problems with balance, or who dislike sweating or becoming overheated due to sensory issues.

Remember that many of our habits are set early on in life and it's much more likely that you can prevent obesity by giving children the opportunity to be active.

Swimming Can Improve Motor Skills

While other physical activities and sports require a great deal of coordination and a high level of motor skill development. And unfortunately, says Micah Raskin, that often means that children with special needs are left out of the fun. Swimming, on the other hand, doesn't require that same level of coordination and dexterity - but at the same time, it helps to improve those skills.

When you swim, you have to kick your legs and move your arms in tandem. This cross-lateral function engages both sides of the brain and encourages neural pathways related to motor skills and coordination to connect and strengthen. The more you swim, the easier it is for your body to move in these coordinated ways - this is called muscle memory.

Swimming also requires the engagement of almost every muscle group - especially your core. As your muscles are used, they get stronger. The more children with motor-skill disabilities are able

to develop for their core, the easier it is for them to move. And because swimming requires only resisting the water, it's a great choice for those who are unable to perform other muscle-building exercises.

Swimming Can Help Reduce Physical and Mental Pain

Many studies have shown that swimming can help reduce pain levels for those with juvenile arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and other conditions that cause chronic pain. For those who experience pain because of pressure on the joints or muscles, swimming is like being in a low-gravity environment. As you float, the density of the water takes the pressure off of your body, reducing pain and inflammation caused by pressure.

Swimming is also excellent for reducing pain caused by spasming muscles, like those who suffer from multiple sclerosis. Floating - especially in warm water - allows muscles to relax and releases endorphins that help combat pain.

Swimming is also a wonderful remedy for depression, anxiety, and the mental anguish of overstimulation. Several factors play into this. First, the body can only experience so much sensation at once, and if your body is enveloped by the water, this can cancel out other stimulation and sensory input, making it comforting for those who suffer from over-stimulation.

Secondly, swimming releases endorphins and boosts the production of serotonin, both of which help fight off symptoms of depression and anxiety. And thirdly, swimming is often a social activity. The human connection with peers in your community builds confidence and satisfies the human need for socialization.

Micah Raskin reminds us that it's important to talk to your child's doctors, physical therapists, caregivers, and mental health professionals before signing them up for swimming lessons. While swimming is safe for most children with disabilities, there are some cases where it could overwhelm them or harm them physically.

There are programs like the ones [provided by Micah Raskin](#) all over the country. Check with your local public pool or YMCA for information on swimming lessons and swim times for children with special needs. Depending on your child's diagnosis and healthcare, the sign-up fees may be covered by insurance as occupational therapy costs.

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