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Mr. Greco

English 3

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Weightlifting

Childhood is a time of running around having fun with your friends. Fitting in with a group and feeling like you're part of a pack is very important. Imagine this, you are a kid running around and having fun with your friends. The only problem is you are having a hard time keeping up, you are a little heavier than the rest of your friends and a little slower as a result. John Larson had just this experience as a kid. According to John, he was one of the "heavier" kids growing up. He started going to the gym and training with weights to become more fit starting when he was 13. Fast forward to today and John is well known for being one of the most prolific weightlifters at Los Altos High. Weightlifting is a great way to get in shape, and with a consistent routine, stay physically fit.

According Mr. Esparza, a P.E. teacher at Mountain View High School, the appropriate age that people should start weight training is around 13-14 years old. Mr. Esparza recommends this because in that age range the body is just starting to feel the effects of puberty. Puberty is a time when muscle development begins which is why weight training at this time will be easier and show better results. Being fit isn't the only reason that one should create an exercise routine that involves weights. One reason that people expressed interest for weightlifting again and again is as a tool that lets you

connects with other people. Some additional benefits are self improvement, confidence, and the overall feeling of good health.

John and Eric are friends who go to school and weight lift together. They are both juniors at Los Altos High School. They both have a membership to a local weightlifting gym that they use on an average of 5-6 days a week. They both admit that it's not 100% weightlifting when they go every time. There are days when they are fooling around, especially if their friends are present for a session. John said, "Unless someone is extremely like-minded and in the same spot as me and trying to just focus to get their workout done, I end up getting off task." This is an example of the focus in which weight training takes and why some people prefer to go about it solo. On the other hand, Heather, the crossfit coach, said that she loves to work out in large groups of people because she loves the camaraderie of weight training. Both of these people at opposite ends of the spectrum in their preferences, show that weight lifting and training can mean so many different things to different people. This makes it more challenging to pin down why people enjoy it so much. There is one thing that all these people said that they enjoyed the most about weight training: self improvement.

Eric Carlson' favorite part of the sport is self improvement, "[self improvement is] one of the things I really like about the sport because it's not so set in stone, you can always reach further and try to achieve something more." The idea of setting goals and working towards them until you meet them is a consistent theme that the weightlifters endorse. For Eric, the improvement he saw came in both a physical and a mental way:

“I was never really the most, significant person when it came to school, I was always not that noticeable because of my size and I only had a few friends growing up, ... so weightlifting has helped me make more friends with common interests and it really helps me feel like I'm more of a presence and helps my confidence so I'm able to talk to more people and really build better connections.”

Eric takes huge pride in the fact that weightlifting has not only helped him grow physically but also mentally. Eric told us that if he misses out on a day of going to the gym he feels “sluggish” and “lethargic”. He feels better about himself when he is being physically active. Mr. Esparza says that weight training is his “main mode of exercise” and that he lifts every single day. He doesn't lift to be huge, he weight trains as more of a general fitness routine just to keep himself fit. So to Mr. Esparza weight training is a way to stay fit while to Eric and John it is a way to get bigger and achieve personal goals.

Weightlifting can mean different things to different people. This is why weightlifting has become more and more popular in recent years. According to Heather, having a program like CrossFit has lead to the rise in popularity of weightlifting. CrossFit workouts involve weightlifting. To begin working out in CrossFit the gyms will teach proper form and technique in lifting weights. She agrees with Mr. Esparza on the point that social media has lead to a rise in people lifting. The ability to show off to your friends and family about how well you do in the gym adds to the camaraderie of seeing your friends do well and helps with self esteem. CrossFit has lead to the rise of

weightlifting because it makes the sport easier to understand. Crossfit combines implements of weight training, body weight training, and some cardio and dieting to promote fitness. The workouts usually involve a mix of a bunch of different exercises and lifts that you must perform in a certain amount of time. CrossFit has grown exponentially in the past decade and more. There are CrossFit gyms all over the country and even multiple gyms in large towns. This easy accessibility of gyms, combined with how easy it is to understand and do even at home has lead these exercise plans to skyrocket in popularity. According to “Weightlifting on the Rise”, an article by the Wall Street Journal, “Between the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games, membership in USA Weightlifting (USAW) more than doubled, from 11,000 to over 26,000.” This massive gain highlights how the popularity has increased in recent years. Those numbers only show people who are willing to take their passion for weightlifting to the next step by getting certified. Mr. Esparza is one of those 15,000 people who got certified which helped enables him to testify to the strengths of the program:

“I went it knowing a lot of stuff, and walked out learning a lot more.

It’s not one of those certifications where you take a test, sit down,

and you answer questions. You’re actually actively doing the lifts, all

weekend long, and you’re pretty sore after both days, especially

Sunday after two full days of lifts. It’s a great certification, where its

both physical, and mental for the whole weekend.”

People who want to take their passion for the sport to the next level are ideal candidates for certification. Certification may not be for everyone, but for the people who are into

weightlifting as a sport it really helps take their workouts to the next level, stay fit, and be excellent instructors. There is always a demand for certified weightlifter's so their future's looking bright.

According to Heather, Crossfit as well as social media have lead to a major increase in weightlifting. She expects that increase is only going to get bigger and bigger. As people start to care more about themselves and want to grow closer to friends or even make new ones, weightlifting will be popular. Instagram and other social medias have given people ways to connect and discover passions they never knew they had and weightlifting has benefitted from social media greatly. Eric and John both participate in weightlifting tournaments and they enjoy sharing their achievements on social media. Mr. Esparza thinks that weight lifting is only going to become more popular in the future. He personally encourages people of all ages and genders to try out weight training.

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