Many schools promote physical fitness through gym class and by sponsoring sports teams. Despite this, students have gotten less and less fit, on average, over the last decade. A lot of things factor in to good health—diet, sleep, exercise, and healthy lifestyle choices. Most students hear about these things in school. But there’s one aspect of exercise you might not have heard as much about: weightlifting.

Most people think of weightlifters as men and women with muscles as big as watermelons, bulging out all over their bodies. That might be true for professional weightlifters who make it their career and who practically live in the gym, but it isn’t the norm.

You may be able to help your body a lot by adding even just a half hour of weight training three or four times a week. You may never look like Arnold Schwarzenegger, but you’ll probably feel better and you’ll be helping your body burn fat.

Fat burning? That’s right. Because each pound of your lean muscle mass burns calories all day, every day of your life. The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn while active or even while resting. This means that your metabolism runs much more efficiently and that the extra cookie that snuck into your day has a much lower chance of getting stored as fat. It will be burned for fuel instead.

Recent studies have indicated that weight training can reduce the likelihood of sports-related injury. Furthermore, weight training builds bone density and can increase the body’s blood-pumping capacity by enlarging blood vessels.

Still, you shouldn’t go out, buy some weights, and start lifting them without finding out if weight training is right for you. Some experts are not sure that kids should lift weights.

William Barnes is a Texas A&M University health professor who knows a lot about child fitness. He says that for the right age group, weightlifting can be very good. He believes kids 16 years of age and older can benefit from weight training.

“There are two problems to consider,” Barnes says. “First, is the stress of weightlifting too much on a kid’s skeletal system?”
Should Huntington Build a Skate Park

The Mayor’s proposal to build a skate park on the site of the old Fairgrounds grandstand is an idea whose time has come. The project, estimated to cost $500,000, is a timely investment in both city renewal and the welfare of our community’s youth. The proposed skate park will be a welcome addition to Huntington for several reasons:

1. The current site is an eyesore. Ever since the county built the new ballpark at Rainy Lake, the old Fairgrounds grandstand site has been virtually abandoned. No community activities have been held there in years. The site has become an eyesore. Unless we find a new use for the site, it will become a health hazard and need constant upkeep.

2. It’s a good investment in the central city. The old Fairgrounds’ location near the center of town is a symbolic location for Huntingtonians. Are we going to abandon our central city like so many others have done? What message are we sending future citizens if we build at the edge of town but let the heart of the city fall apart? A skate park is ideal for the location because so many of our kids can ride their bikes or walk to the park.

3. The park will provide an exciting, healthy pastime for our children. One major challenge for any town is to provide kids with a healthy, constructive way to spend time together—one that’s not boring. Kids today are into “Boards, Blades, & Bikes,” not taffy pulls and ice cream socials. The skate park will provide a meeting place in the center of town. Kids can have fun in a healthy social setting. Fresh air and sunshine never hurt anyone-otherwise, kids will just play video games.