



Family Fitness

Being physically active provides long-term health benefits for the whole family. Additionally, providing opportunities for children to be active early on puts them on a path to better physical and mental health.

Consider these health benefits of regular physical activity:

- Helps prevent certain chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke
- Controls weight and reduces fat
- Promotes strong bones, muscles, and joints
- Conditions heart and lungs
- Builds strength and endurance
- Improves sleep
- Decreases risk of depression
- Increases energy level and self-esteem
- Relieves stress

Being active can be as simple as walking the dog or as intensive as running a marathon. It also provides an opportunity to spend time with each other. Aim for at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity for adults and 60 minutes for children.

Where to start:

1. Have the family decide on an activity that includes the whole family. Consider intramural sports leagues, nearby hikes, or local fun-runs.
2. Set aside family time each day or each week to participate in the activity.
3. Make a chart to measure the family's progress...stickers and all!

Looking for some no or low-cost ideas to get your family moving? Try some of the following:

- Limit the time spent in front of a screen (outside of work and school). Screens include televisions, computers, video games, and cell phones.
- Plant a family garden.
- Plan vacations around an activity. Hike in a national park, swim in the ocean, or bike to a destination.
- Celebrate the seasons and go sledding, swimming, rake the leaves, or fly a kite.
- Start a family tradition. Take a daily walk together after dinner, or plan a monthly basketball tournament with family and friends.
- Divide and rotate physical chores among all members of the family.
- Participate in community events. Look for benefit runs/walks, litter patrol, farmer's markets, and art walks.
- Keep a container in the car with a Frisbee, jump rope, kite, or other sports gear. Have a few minutes to spare? Dig out the hula hoop!
- Walk or ride your bike for transportation. Bike to the store, to work, to school or the park.
- Enjoy outings and events sponsored by state parks and city recreation centers.

For more parenting tips and tools, visit the website or call the toll free number listed below.



www.apshelplink.com



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