

5 easy
ways to
get children

MOVING

For parents



Childhood obesity is now recognized as a national epidemic, which means that it is now more important than ever to encourage your children to move, play, and be active every day. You don't need a lot of extra time or fancy equipment—a little imagination and enthusiasm is all it takes. So, what are you waiting for? Get moving with your child!

1 Turn up the music and dance.

Multitask: Teach your children to dance while they brush their teeth, clean their rooms, or talk on the phone.

Get some new moves: Challenge your children to create their own new dance moves that are super silly or super cool—or both!

Have a dance-a-thon: Crank up your children's favorite song and try to hop on one foot through the entire song. Ramp it up by doing the same with jumping jacks (you may want to start with a shorter song).

2 Find the hidden gym in your home.

Take the stairs: If you have a staircase, take three trips up and down with your child. If not, do 20 “step-ups” on a doorstep.

Curl some cans: Find two of the heaviest canned goods your child can hold. Show him how to slowly lift the cans up to his chest, bending at the elbows, hold for 2 seconds, and slowly lower them back down. Repeat 10 times.

Shoot some indoor hoops: A trashcan, box, or hamper can act as a basketball goal for a quick game of one-on-one with a light ball.

3 Workout with videos.

Find the right one: Libraries, video stores, and online video services have *many* exercise videos to choose from, even some created specifically for children. You may need to try a few to find one that fits your child's style and abilities, so rentals may be more economical at first.

Wake up with yoga: Yoga helps loosen the muscles and focus the mind for a great start to the day, so try a yoga video early in the morning.

Take a fitness break: While watching TV, use the time during the commercial breaks to do jumping jacks, crunches/sit-ups, or push-ups.

4 Make your home shine.

Do double duty: Turn everyday chores into fitness opportunities. Ask your child to help do the laundry, vacuum, or clean his or her room, all of which burn calories and build muscle.

5 Take it outside.

Do yard work: Ask for your child's help with lawn care tasks that he or she can safely do. Gardening can provide good exercise, and all of that work yields fresh, healthy foods.

Walk, pedal, and scoot: When it is safe and practical to do so, leave the car at home and walk, ride a scooter, or bike with your children to the park, a neighborhood friend's house, or the store.

Make it a race: While you walk or ride, speed it up on the last block to see who can get there the fastest.

Create or join a neighborhood team: Enjoying team activities doesn't have to involve organized sports, which can sometimes be too expensive or time consuming. Instead, gather the neighborhood children for a fun, relaxed game of their favorite sport. Or, check your local recreation center for open gym times for sports like tennis and swimming.

Let them lead: Does your child have younger siblings, neighbors, or friends that want to learn a new game or skill? Encourage your child to introduce other children to his or her favorite sports, games, and activities.

Source: Alliance for a Healthier Generation, “Get Moving! Fitness Tips for Kids,” <<http://healthiergeneration.org/parents.aspx?id=3308>>, accessed on June 19, 2012.