

Activate Your Family!

Physical activity - it benefits you instantly, no matter what activity you choose. Moving muscles and making your heart beat faster can help you reduce stress, feel more energetic, look better, sleep better, and have greater concentration. Staying active over time helps your family maintain healthy weights, and protects them from developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and osteoporosis (weak bones). And, there's more. Kids who are active often do better in school! **Establishing an active lifestyle can help your family live longer, healthier lives.**



How much activity do kids need?

Kids need **at least 1 hour** of moderate to vigorous activity every day. This can be spread out in bouts of 10-15 minutes throughout the day. Older children (age 12 and up) need more time in **vigorous** activities to keep fit - at least 20 minutes on 3 or more days a week -- as part of their overall activity.

What is moderate activity?	What is vigorous activity?
Games, sports, and recreation that are equal in intensity to brisk walking:	Games, sports, and recreation that are more intense than brisk walking...makes you sweat:
hopscotch dodge ball	Running games (tag) jogging
playground play bowling	jumping rope basketball
walking bike-riding	soccer aerobic dancing

Parents are important role models!

Children with active families are more likely to stay active as adults. You don't need to join a gym to be active. Try these ways to enjoy physical activity together as a family:



- Play a game of yard tag or basketball after school.
- Try to schedule 1 fun physical activity together on weekends.
- Involve kids in household chores, instead of watching TV.
- Limit TV time to less than 2 hours per day.
- Enroll children in structured physical activities that meet 1-2 days per week. Many programs are offered free after school.

Your local community centers can help

Many community centers offer kids and families fun opportunities for sports and recreation, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and others.

For more information:

Check out www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/exercise.html

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