

[IMAGE]

5 Ways to Get Kids Moving

By Editorial Staff

Sometimes it seems as if slowing children down is parents' biggest challenge, but with video games, television, fast food and a vast array of other couch-promoting activities on the rise, keeping kids *active* is actually a growing concern. What can you do to promote regular physical activity? Here are five outside-of-the-box ways to get your kids moving:

1. Help It Grow: Teaching your kids the joy of gardening is not just an educational experience; planting seeds, picking weeds and tilling soil can help them work up a sweat while enjoying the outdoors. You'd be surprised how much physical exertion it takes to dig a few holes and pull stubborn weeds from the ground. (By the way, if your garden includes edible items, not just flowers, then you're also teaching your children the value of whole-food nutrition, which can only benefit their health, now and in the long term.)

2. Junior Olympics: Beyond any organized sports your children may play, why not involve the whole family in your own backyard Olympics? For example, just a few plastic cones, a large garbage can (the biggest you can find), and balls specific to several sports (soccer, basketball, football) and you've got a multi-phase competition. Have the kids run through the cones (design a challenging course) and try to score into the trash can, with each ball positioned at different points along the course. You can also design an obstacle course with minimal money and time that will keep them moving all day long.

active kids - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **3. Scavenger Hunt:** A timed scavenger hunt between teams is another fun way to keep your kids active. Divide the family in half (or recruit neighborhood friends for larger teams) with a parent as the lead for each team. Predetermine items to be "scavenged" and a set time to gather all items on the list. Then start the clock and go! This works best if you've got a large yard or field where you can hide different things (much like an Easter egg hunt), or if you go to a mall or store and use your shopping list as the scavenger items.

4. Dance Contest: Family dance night is a great way to get the whole family moving, and if you've got a video camera, you'll get some great footage for the family archives as well. Have the kids compete against one another (with parents as the judges) or better yet, join in the fun and divide into teams, with each team

having to dance to the same song. Who wins? Everyone does because you're all moving! (This is one activity where a video game isn't necessarily a bad thing; more and more game manufacturers are coming out with games that challenge players to replicate dance moves.)

5. Spring Cleaning: OK, so we admit that this idea might not be as fun as the rest, but from a movement perspective, it's an effective one. What better way to get your kids off the couch than by having them clean under, around and behind it? Whether sweeping, dusting or just helping move furniture so you (or they) can vacuum, cleaning is a great way to stay active. You can also get the kids to help with outdoor activities, such as shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, etc., to burn calories.

Need more ideas for keeping your kids in shape? Talk to your doctor of chiropractic about the value of regular physical activity and how your children – and you – can stay healthy by staying active.

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