

[IMAGE]

Get Your Kids Off the Couch This Summer

By Editorial Staff

Just because summer's here and school is coming to a close, providing hours of free activity time, doesn't mean your kids are out of the woods when it comes to health, specifically weight gain. Sure, during the summer months kids tend to spend more time outside being active, but without the responsibilities and set schedule of school, ample opportunity exists to just "hang out," which these days can mean sitting on the couch at home, playing video games, watching TV and remaining altogether sedentary – a recipe for weight gain in the short term, and obesity and diabetes in the long term. Here are four summer solutions to get your kids off the couch until fall rolls around:

1. Stick to a schedule: Part of the real value of school throughout the year is that it teaches children to stick to a schedule – an invaluable lesson that will last into adulthood. Of course, it also occupies the majority of their time with positive pursuits. Keep that attitude going during the summer by charting a schedule for your kids that keeps them focused and maintains your year-long rules limiting TV / screen time. Too many parents give their kids a three-month "break" from routine over summer, overlooking the negative consequences.

2. Get them out of the house: There's no better way to get kids off the couch than, well, by getting them off the couch! Now's the time to sit down with your children and brainstorm summer activities that will keep them busy – and physically active – throughout the summer. By the way, this may be a great time to brainstorm your *own* summer vacation from work so your entire family can do something fun, active and away from the daily grind.

3. Challenge them: Kids love to be challenged, so give them a few challenges of the physical fitness variety this summer. It could be as simple as trying to beat their high score at beach smashball every week, to setting up an obstacle course in your backyard and inspiring them to improve their completion time. Keep your kids active by giving them *a reason* to be active.

4. Get some help: Generally speaking, health takes a hit when people don't have enough to do. Armed with too much time, boredom sets in, which can lead to mindless hours of video games and potato chips to fill the

void. This summer, create a neighborhood strategy to keep your kids occupied. Exchange play days with other parents, organize weekly activities or day trips with your kids' friends, etc. You can also arrange for your children to attend a few community craft / activity classes throughout summer. It's all about keeping them engaged, enthusiastic and above all, off the couch.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=1805&no_paginate=true&no_b=true