

[IMAGE]

Keep Them Active

By Editorial Staff

Have your kids been getting enough exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic? On face value, one would think kids would be getting plenty of exercise; after all, they haven't been sitting at school desks all day, as would have been the case during any "normal" year. But two factors may have turned the tables: lack of opportunity (the school playground is the only place to exercise for millions of kids who either live in the city or don't have a backyard to their home); and lack of initiative (it's far too easy to play video games and dawdle on your smartphone all day when they're "nothing else to do").

Hopefully you've already taken steps to counteract this tendency toward inactivity, but if you haven't, here are some tips:

- *All in the Family*: When you've been essentially stuck at home for months, and even now may be hesitant to visit friends and otherwise interact with the world, family is all you've got. But that's a good thing, particularly because you can all exercise together. Just mask up and take family walks, jogs, bike rides, and with restrictions easing, trips to the local park / beach / etc.
- *Create a Competition*: Nothing gets a kid off the couch more than a good-old-fashioned competition, so make one that gets their heart pumping and muscles working. For older kids, who can do the most push-ups or sit-ups in a day? If you have a treadmill or other cardio equipment at home, who can run for the longest, and at the highest speed (safely, of course)? For younger kids, choose activities that involve body-weight only and mirror your exercises, such as leg lifts, arm swings, gentle stretches, etc. Write the name of each family member on a chalkboard and see how competition motivates!
- active kid - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Keep the House Clean*: Your house should be cleaner than ever during COVID-19, and not just because you're sanitizing / disinfecting more often. Put the kids to work, not only with the "regular" chores like dusting, sweeping, etc., but also with activities such as helping you reorganize their closets, make more space in the garage or attic, etc. All that box moving adds up when it comes to fitness.
- *Schedule It*: This tip may be the most valuable, and not just from an exercise perspective. Kids (and most adults) crave structure in their lives, whether they're willing to admit it or not. With classes out,

work gone remote, and other abrupt changes, that structure has been altogether disrupted. Scheduling exercise at different points of the day is one element of giving kids (and you) that structure back.

Hopefully as you read this, you're finding more and more exercise options reopening in your area. But that doesn't mean you're ready and willing to venture out, especially with your kids. Take the above tips to heart as ways to improve your life, engage your children and ensure they stay active until life returns to "normal," whatever that may be.

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