

# FUN ways for kids to exercise



## Why is exercise or physical activity important?

Physical activity produces overall physical, psychological and social benefits. Inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. And physical activity helps with:

- Building endurance and becoming stronger
- Strengthening the cardiovascular system
- Increasing energy
- Controlling weight, reducing obesity
- Reducing blood pressure
- Raising HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Reducing the risk of diabetes and some kinds of cancer
- Improved psychological well-being, including more self-confidence and higher self-esteem

## How to promote physical activity among kids

- Increase physical activity by reducing sedentary time (e.g., watching television, playing computer video games or talking on the phone).

- Physical activity should be fun!
- Parents should try to be role models for active lifestyles.
- Provide children with opportunities for more physical activity.
- Strive to find different activities that a child will enjoy and look forward to doing.

## How much exercise do children need?

The American Heart Association recommends all children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day that is developmentally appropriate and varied.

If children don’t have a full 60-minute activity break each day, try to provide at least two 30-minute periods or four 15-minute periods in which they can engage in vigorous activities appropriate to their age, gender and stage of physical and emotional development.

(continued)

# Fun ways for kids to exercise at home



## SCAVENGER HUNT

Create a scavenger hunt for kids around your home so they have to find each item on the list in the order it's written. Walk or run between items, and have kids check off each object as they discover it.



## HULA HOOP

A hula hoop is a versatile piece of equipment. Besides standard hula hooping, the hula hoop can be spun from the arm or leg. If the hula hoop is large enough, it can be used as a jump rope. This helps eye-hand coordination and large motor skills.



## KICK BALL

Get a soccer-type ball and give one to each kid. Have kids run laps around your yard or an empty field, kicking the ball in front of them or have them kick one ball back and forth to each other.



## FAMILY TIME

Children will naturally model the examples that are set for them. If parents wish to raise healthy and fit children, this can be much easier to do if the parents themselves are also fit and healthy. Families can also have physically active fun together by playing active games outside and by engaging in activities together.



## JUMP ROPING

Jump ropes are affordable and easy to store. Keep a couple in a place kids can reach them. Encourage jump rope games with family or friends to keep it interesting. Check for jump rope games online or find a book at your local library.



## WALK OR BIKE

Take a daily family walk or a bike ride through the neighborhood.



## RUNNING

Running is perhaps the easiest way for kids to get exercise. Take a walk with kids and challenge them to see if they can "run to the next mailbox by the time I count to 10." If you are with several kids, let them play tag!



## PERFORMANCE SKILLS

Check out the Performance Skills for Kids available free on the TTYL website.