

# The Daily Parent

A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

## LET'S GET PHYSICAL:

### Exercising with Your Children

**P**hysical activity is an important part of children's growth and development. Researchers say that toddlers need 30 minutes of structured physical activities everyday, and then an additional 60 minutes of free playtime. Being active at a young age can help children stay fit for life!



activity (like walking) for 30 minutes at least five days a week.

As a parent, you can set a good example for your children by exercising regularly. And you can make it a family time activity as well. Exercise with your children! You will all feel better, stay fitter, and spend quality time together.

Children who are active develop stronger muscles and bones, and are less likely to develop health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and other conditions later in life. Being active can also help children maintain a stable mood and sleep better.

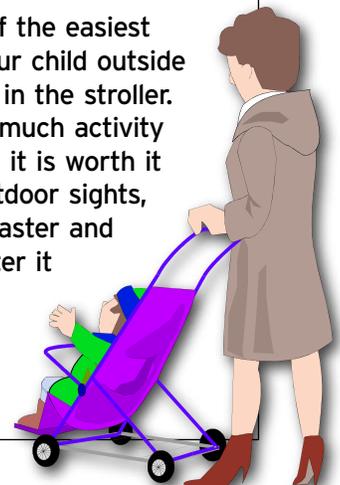
Being active though is not just for children! Exercise helps adults maintain a healthy weight, and it can also help *you* stay in a better mood, sleep better, and combat some chronic diseases, such as heart disease. The Centers for Disease Control says adults should participate in moderate physical

### Outdoor Activities

When the weather is good, go outside with your child. In addition to being active and outdoors in the fresh air, your neighborhood or local park will give your child a chance to see and learn about different things in the environment.

### Infants

**The Stroller-Walk:** One of the easiest ways to exercise with your child outside is to take him for a walk in the stroller. Your infant won't get as much activity from this as you will, but it is worth it so he can take in the outdoor sights, smells and sounds. The faster and longer you walk, the better it is for you. Another great way to walk with your baby is to use a baby carrier or sling.



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## Exercising with Your Children

**Sandbox Diggers:** If your baby can sit up on his own, take him to a playground that has a sandbox where you can both dig and play around in the sand. Taking some toys such as a truck with an open back and a shovel can make sand play even more fun.

### Toddlers

**Catch:** Rolling or kicking a large ball is a good way to be active for both of you! Toddlers love to run after big balls or play with it rolling back and forth to you.

**Gardening:** Dig in the dirt with your toddler, either in your own yard or a community garden (call your city or county government to learn if this is available). If this option isn't available, see if your local school has an area that needs some gardening. Your toddler will learn about plants, and the cycle of growth. You can plant flowers, but the digging, carrying plants and all the equipment that go with it are really what works out your arms, legs and more.

### Preschoolers

**Ball:** Balls are great ways to exercise large muscles and get the heart pumping. Try playing soccer with your preschooler.

Set up goal areas in whatever outdoor space you can find by using old milk cartons or use cardboard boxes. Kick the ball from one end of your area to the other. Basketball is also another fun sport to play with your child. If you have a hoop, shoot the ball to the hoop.

Have your preschooler try. Help her get the ball into the hoop and just have a good time.



### How Many Calories Do I Burn?

Activity/Calories Burned After 30 Minutes\*

Watching TV	34
Office Work	51.5
Stroller Push	129.5 (17 minute mile)
Sandbox Digging	170.4
Catch	85.2
Jumping Rope	340.9
Socce	238.6
Basketball	272.2
Gardening	136.3
Playing with children/baby	136.3
Cleaning House (light dusting/etc)	85.2
Dancing	153.2
Stretching	85.2

\*For a 150-pound adult, from <http://www.primusweb.com/cgi-bin/fpc/actcalc.pl>

**Jumping Rope:** Jumping rope is great way to help your preschooler exercise and develop coordination. Learn some jump rope rhymes and share them with your child. Not only is jumping rope an excellent way for adults to exercise—it burns more calories than any other activity in this newsletter!

### Indoor Exercise

You don't have to go outdoors or have a lot of space to help your child get some exercise indoors. A little creativity always

## Exercising with Your Children

helps. You probably won't burn as many calories in indoor activities, but just moving is a start.

### Infants

**Kicking and Moving:** Put your baby on the floor on her back, and hold a soft object (like a stuffed animal) that she can kick. Use facial expressions and noises to tell her to kick the animal. Act excited when she does. Give your baby a rattle or other noisemaker that he can shake. Babies love it when they can make things happen.

**Patty-Cake:** Your baby might not yet know the words. But, clapping hands and playing patty-cake gives him a chance to get moving.

### Toddlers

**Move Like Animals:** Stand next to your toddler, and call out names of zoo and farm animals. Once you have said the name, your toddler (and you!) should move the way the animal does, and make noises like the animal. It will be fun and help your young one use some energy.

**Dancing:** From toddler age to grown-ups, everyone can dance. Play your toddler's favorite music or yours—anything with a good beat—and dance together. Don't be afraid to get into the music—the more you move around, the better!

### Preschoolers

**Clean the House:** Make cleaning more than a chore by involving your preschooler. Preschoolers love to help with chores. Though some tasks (using chemicals) may be dangerous for your child, chores such as setting the table, light dusting, picking up toys or sweeping are great opportunities to keep your child active. He'll also get a feeling of responsibility for taking care of the home. Put on some music to make the work more fun.



**Stretching Out:** Work on your flexibility and help your child learn how to exercise healthfully by stretching together. Some moves you can try are:

- ▶ Touching your toes
- ▶ Arm circles
- ▶ Overhead reach (reach your arm over your body and stretch to one side and the other)
- ▶ Whatever other stretches you know!

Overall, enjoy yourselves. You don't have to run a marathon to stay in shape—any exercise you can do will be good for you and your child. And, the time you spend together having fun will be great for your relationship.

### For More Information:

- ▶ **Kidnetic**, [www.kidnetic.com](http://www.kidnetic.com) was developed by the International Food Information Council (and other groups), and is designed for older children, but features many activities, and computer games that encourage children to get active and learn more about fitness.

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- ▶ **KidsHealth**, [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org), provides doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. Created by The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media, KidsHealth provides families with accurate, up-to-date, and jargon-free health information they can use, including healthy activities for young children.
- ▶ **Kids in Action**, [www.fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction.html](http://www.fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction.html), is a booklet produced by the government on fitness specifically for children ages birth through 5. It contains activities for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- ▶ **The Fitness Jumpsite**, <http://www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/index.html>, is a website primarily for adults designed by the Lance Armstrong Foundation. It includes a calorie calculator where adults can put in their weight and activity time to show how many calories they've burned.



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