



Physical  
Activity

The American Heart Association recommends that healthy children, age 2 and older, participate in an hour of moderate to vigorous activity every day.

Why is physical activity important for my child and my family?

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Prevent heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke
- Reduce blood pressure
- Increase energy level
- Stress management
- Active children are more likely to become active adults
- Psychological benefits- more self-confidence and social benefits
- Higher life expectancy and quality of life

While an hour each day might sound like a large chunk of time, there are many ways to incorporate activity into your family's routine. It all adds up and if you plan ahead you can accomplish a lot.

### Goal-Setting Tips

Here are some tips on setting and achieving exercise goals:

- **Be realistic.** Don't decide you're going to win the state gymnastics championship if you don't know how to do a cartwheel. Start with smaller goals that can help you to eventually achieve an end goal.
- **Be specific.** "We are going to do family activities more often" isn't motivating because it's too vague and there's nothing to work toward. "We are going to set aside 30 minutes each evening to go on a walk as a family" is a much more specific and valuable goal to set.
- **Track your progress.** Keep a log or use an app to monitor yourself on your way to achieving your goal.
- **Talk it up.** Tell friends and family — they'll give support and praise, plus you'll hate the idea of having to admit you haven't continued with the goal.
- **Picture yourself succeeding.** This is the best reward of all! Just like picturing a made free throw shot prior to taking the shot, seeing yourself reach your goal is beneficial to the outcome of your efforts.

These goal setting tips can work for both individual goals and family goals.

## What if my child is uncoordinated or overweight?

All children, even less-coordinated ones, need to be physically active. Activity may be particularly helpful for the physical and psychological well-being of children with a weight problem. Start with activities they can do and as they improve you can expand and do more.

Here are some ideas for family activities to get started:

- **Enjoy the great outdoors!** Schedule a time each day for an outdoor activity with your children. Find a walking path near your home or bicycle path to ride on.
- **Join a team.** Encourage children to join school or club sports teams.
- **Schedule family playtime.** Take a walk or play a family game of tag after dinner each night. Make it fun for everyone to exercise together. Choose activities that require movement, such as bowling, catch or miniature golf.
- **Choose toys wisely.** Give children toys that encourage physical activity, such as balls, kites, skateboards, jump ropes and hula hoops.
- **Limit screen time.** Experts warn that one to two hours of screen time a day should be the limit for children, but some are logging more than double that amount. Set boundaries. Keep the television and electronic media out of your child's bedroom and limit computer usage to school projects.
- **Plant a garden.** Caring for plants gives your children a reason to get outside each day. Learning how to grow a garden teaches the food system, while sampling the harvest encourages healthy eating habits.
- **Chip in with chores.** Rake leaves, shovel snow and do other home-maintenance projects as a family. In the end, your home will be better off and so will your family's health.
- **Be an example.** As a parent you can be a role model for an active lifestyle.
- **Brainstorm.** Prepare a list of activities that your family would enjoy and try them out.

**One Idea:** You can also create fitness games using items you already have around the house. Choose a few short activities that your family would enjoy such as jumping jacks, squats, hopping, crab walks, planks, etc. Then assign each number on a dice to an activity. Kids can take turns rolling the dice. Then the whole family will complete the activity together that corresponds with the number on the dice. Continue with the game for as long as you'd like.

You could do the same activity but with Uno cards. Assign an activity to each color on the cards and then do as many moves for each card as the number drawn. For example, if red is jumping jacks and you pick a red 10, then everyone would do 10 jumping jacks together. Get creative and come up with your own games based on what your family enjoys.

**Father/Male Engagement Activity:** Go outside with your children each day and enjoy some time playing together. Throw a ball, go to a park, play tag, etc.

## Resources

### Bannock County

<http://www.pocatello.us/278/Parks-Recreation>

<http://www.visitpocatello.com/things-to-do/pages/recreation>

<https://www.bannockcounty.us/juvenile/probation/community-resources/sportsandrecreational/>

### Bear Lake/ Rich

<http://www.bearlake.org/recreation>

<https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/find-an-activity>

### Box Elder

[https://www.activityreg.com/clientpage\\_t1.wcs](https://www.activityreg.com/clientpage_t1.wcs)

<http://www.brhd.org/images/BoxPADirectory4.16.pdf>

### Cache

[http://www.loganutah.org/government/departments/parks\\_and\\_recreation/index.php](http://www.loganutah.org/government/departments/parks_and_recreation/index.php)

[http://www.brhd.org/images/Health\\_Promotion\\_2015/CVcountysm-2.pdf](http://www.brhd.org/images/Health_Promotion_2015/CVcountysm-2.pdf)

### Caribou

<http://www.sodaspringsid.com/recreation/>

<http://www.caribourec.org/>

### Franklin

<http://www.prestonidahorealestate.com/community.html>

### Oneida

<http://www.maladidaho.org/recreation.html>