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Exercising With Kids -- Tips For Parents

By Lynn Bode

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by: **Lynn Bode**

Making exercise a priority is a challenge for everyone. And for parents it can be especially difficult to find time to workout because of the full plates that they often juggle. When summer arrives the juggling act becomes even more tricky with kids home from school and involved in extracurricular activities.

But, finding time for regular physical activity is so important that it should be a priority placed on your calendar, just like your kids' softball game. A parent needs to exercise not only for themselves, but also for their kids benefit. It's important to set a good example. If your children never see you engage in fitness or if they hear you complain about working out, then they are going to have a negative image of exercise. Let them know that you workout to stay healthy, to be strong and to have more energy and stamina (so you can keep up with them)!

The big question is how to make it a priority that fits in your schedule. Well, it's actually easier than you may think. With a little planning you can find ways to incorporate workouts into the time you spend with your children. Regardless of what age your children are, there's a way to find time to workout (often even with your kids)! Here are some tips based on the age of your children.

Age: Infant through pre-school Fit in exercise time while they are napping. Try a home exercise video, walking or jogging (if you have a treadmill), jumping rope. Occupy them for even 15 minutes with a video or toy while you do some toning exercises like squats and tricep dips. Grab your stroller and go for a brisk walk*. Or, buy a jogging stroller for more flexibility. With a jogging stroller you can walk faster, jog or even run at a fast pace. And, for veteran rollerbladers, you can even use the stroller for some skating time. For younger children, you can use a back carrier to transport them while walking. This can burn even more calories as the extra weight makes it more challenging. Turn on some music and dance together. Toddlers love dancing, especially when their parents joins in. Push your kid on a swing. And, after every push complete one squat. Use an infant carrier or bike trailer to enjoy a bike ride together.

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Age: Grade School Try rollerblading or skating together. Spend an afternoon at a park with a playground, but don't spend the whole time relaxing on the sidelines - join in on the fun. Spend some time swinging to help workout your legs. Try making it across the monkey bars - even just once (it's a great upper body workout and you'll be amazed that your kid does it with such little ease). Try some pull-ups using a bar on the playset. Do some tricep dips on a nearby park bench. Play catch with a ball or get a small group together for a kickball or softball game. Make Saturdays family bike outing day. Involve your kids while you strength train. Let them count your reps out loud for you and/or clock your rest time in-between sets. For pool outings, don't just spend time soaking up the sun. Walk back and forth in shallow water while your kids have fun splashing about. On rainy days that force you inside, walk or run up and down the stairs. You might even make it a contest to see who can finish 5 complete rounds first.

Age: Teenagers Register for a fun run (or walk) event and spend time together training for the event. Purchase a family gym membership and workout together weekly. Play tennis or basketball together.

Consider joining a community volleyball or softball team that includes enthusiasts of all ages. Don't just sit and cheer your kids at their sporting events. Every few minutes do some walking or jumping jacks or squats. Implement a daily family walk each day before or after dinner. Work together in the yard raking leaves, planting flowers, trimming trees.

So, with all the above recommendations, you no longer have the "I'm a parent - I don't have time to workout" excuse. If you implement these activities for just 30 minutes three times per week, you can easily burn an extra 450 calories or more! Plus, working out sets a great example for your children that will teach them at an early age how important (and easy) it is to make physical fitness a part of daily life. Exercising with your kids also provides the extra bonus of spending quality time together.

* For a complete stroller workout plan, visit:

Lynn Bode, author and certified personal trainer, offers her services online through

. Workouts For You provides affordable online exercise programs to help even

the busiest of people lose weight, tone-up, build muscles, increase stamina and more via the Internet. Let us guide you one-on-one through your fitness journey. Visit:

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free sample workout.

Moms: 7 Tips to Organize Your School Kids

By Barbara Myers

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1. Place near the door a rack for outerwear and a shelf or mat for shoes. Have kids deposit their coats, hats, gloves, shoes upon entering. Each evening, they replace with tomorrow's shoes and jackets.
2. Have kids empty their backpacks when they arrive home. Provide a basket in which they can place anything for parents' review.
3. Make sure your kids have a well-lit place to do homework. Teach them to use in/out trays to ensure no homework is missed.
4. Give them chores. Teachers report that kids who regularly do chores at home are more responsible in the classroom.
5. Help kids manage their time. Teach them to list all their responsibilities (chores, homework, soccer practice) and how much time each will take.
6. Prepare each evening. Pick out clothes and shoes. Pack lunches. Set out breakfast. Place backpack by the door.
7. Make an out-the-door checklist. Note everything they need to take to school. Post it on the door.

Barbara Myers is a professional organizer and author of *The Complete Guide to Organized Parenting*. FREE "50 Ways to Manage Your Time" Tips Booklet. Visit <http://www.ineedmoretime.com>

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