

Strategies to get kids to exercise

Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. That's not just true for adults, but for children and teenagers as well.

Parents concerned about their kids living sedentary lives may have more to worry about than they know. According to a 2017 study published in the journal Preventive Medicine that analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination survey from 2003-2004 and 2005-2006, 19-year-olds spent as much time being inactive and sedentary as 60-year-olds.

Getting kids to be more active may be especially difficult for today's parents, who must contend with the internet, social media, tablets, smartphones, and other distractions as they try to encourage their kids to unplug and spend more time being physically active. But parents can try various strategies to get kids off the couch and exercising.

- Set a positive example. Kids, especially young children, often try to emulate their parents. Parents can capitalize on kids' desire to be like mom and dad by exercising in front of their children. Young children



Exercising alongside their children is an effective way for parents to get their kids to be more physically active.

may not be ready to lift weights or run on the treadmill, but parents can embrace kid-friendly exercises, such as walking and cycling. Invite kids along for daily bike rides or go for family walks around the neighborhood after dinner.

- Park the car. Kids don't need to know they're exercising in order to be more physically active. In lieu of driving to the bank or pharmacy, parents can leave the car at home and ride their bikes alongside their children when running errands. If possible, parents can walk youngsters to and from school rather than driving them.

- Choose friendly activities. Adults employ the buddy system as a means to motivate themselves to keep exercising, and that same principle can apply to children, who might be more excited about physical activity if their

friends are joining them. Team sports provide chances to exercise with friends, as do organizations like the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of America. But even inviting a child's friend along on a family hike or bike ride may make such activities more fun for kids.

- Give gifts that

encourage physical activity. Kids might want the latest device or video game for their birthdays, but parents also can give gifts that encourage youngsters to be physically active. Bicycles, rollerblades, ice skates, and sports equipment are just a handful of potential gifts that may compel

kids to exercise more.

Childhood obesity is a significant problem, with the 2015-2016 NHANES reporting that 20.6 percent of youths between the ages of 12 and 19 were obese. Getting kids off the couch and exercising more often can help reduce those figures and ensure healthier futures for kids of all ages.

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- o Self-care advice for the patient and/or caregiver. "We can help alleviate a patient's discomfort," Meitner noted. "Most patients tell us they feel better with compression and other support."



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