



FITNESS

GETTING YOUR KIDS TO EXERCISE

With television, smart devices, and video games as distractions, many parents are finding it increasingly more challenging to keep their children active and fit.

Yet, you may not be as powerless as you think. "Parents can do a lot to help inspire even the most sedentary kids to move more," says Blaise A. Nemeth, MD, associate professor at the American Family Children's Hospital at the University of Wisconsin.

1. Kids see it differently

It's important to understand that children don't feel the same way about exercise as adults do, according to Nemeth. He suggests that you think of yourself as a "playmate" rather than a "personal trainer". Fun and game-oriented exercise will be much more effective than trying to get a child to go for a jog.

2. How to motivate them to want to move

Getting your kids to understand that exercise will help them to be fitter, stronger and healthier can be a great motivator. Kids often enjoy the prospect of improving themselves as much as adults do.

Health journalist and dad, Jeff Campbell suggests exercises like hula hooping, tug of war, martial arts classes and even supervised rock climbing as exciting ways to keep kids active and engaged at the same time.

3. Why exercise is so important for kids

According to an article published on parenting website, Care.com, kids need exercise to develop muscle strength and improve cardiovascular health. It also strengthens bones, decreases body fat and helps to maintain a healthy weight.

There are psychological and emotional benefits too. Healthy exercise has been associated with kids feeling stronger and more confident, which has a beneficial knock-on effect when it comes to developing a healthy self-esteem.

Children who lead active lives and enjoy more physical activity have also been reported to be less inclined towards depression and anxiety when compared to their more sedentary counterparts.

4. Do it together

Families that exercise together thrive together! Let's face it, we can all benefit from the positive effects of exercise.

In an article for WebMD., Dr Daniel Brennan suggests switching up your "go-to family activities".

"Instead of Friday night movies or going for brunch after church, head to a trampoline park or rock climbing wall, or take a hike with a picnic lunch", he suggests.