



5 Simple Ways to Be Active - and Give a Gift TOO!

In our busy, stressful lives, two things can be in short supply (especially at the holidays) - time and money. We don't have time to go to the gym or stick to a fitness routine. And, we don't have money for all the presents we want to give or all the donations we want to make. These simple, active solutions solve both problems at once!

1. Walk someone's dog.

Both dogs and their walkers get real health benefits. For older folks or those with disabilities, getting a dog out and about can be difficult. Offer to regularly walk a friend or neighbor's dog and everyone wins. You've given someone a real gift, plus both you and the dog will be in better shape. Shelter dogs also need walking, which can be your donation to the facility.

2. Play with someone's kids.

Children nearly always have more energy than busy parents, especially single parents. And, most American kids aren't getting anywhere near the 60 minutes of daily activity they need. Set up a regular playdate for sledding, biking, Frisbee® or shooting hoops - and you will give your nieces, nephews, or neighbors (and their parents) a precious gift.

3. Remove someone's snow.

In Montana, getting rid of snow can be a regular fitness activity for several months of the year. Helping a relative, friend, or neighbor keep their sidewalks and driveway clear can be a real gift to them - and outdoor physical activity for you! (To be safe and injury-free, make sure to wear hat and gloves; warm up before starting; and shovel small amounts carefully.)

4. Help with someone's yard work.

All across the country, yard work is a year-round activity (which can be very expensive to pay for). If working outside is something you enjoy, give a neighbor, friend, or relative the gift of your time and energy. Better yet, offer to share yard time with someone: By working together in each other's yards, you'll have someone to talk to and the time will go faster.

5. Introduce someone to your favorite fitness activity.

If you belong to a fitness center or gym - or take regular dance or yoga classes, invite a friend to go with you. Most businesses offer free passes to potential new members and many offer a two-for-one package, especially around the holidays. While there may be a small price-tag for this gift, you can offer courtesy 'chauffeur' services to get them there and back.