



5 Fun Ways to Create A Family Physical Activity Plan

Summertime is a great time to get on a path to better health (and a better attitude) with a family activity plan! In May 2010, the **National Physical Activity Plan** was launched to get Americans up and moving. The goal is to help us all enjoy the physical and mental benefits of being active every day. Here's what your family can do.

1. Set some screen time limits.

Here's a simple approach to screen time (TV, DVDs, computers, and video games): *Do more, watch less together!* While the transition may be a little rough, families are happier and healthier when they pull the plug or cut back. The American Academy of Pediatrics says no screen time under two years, none in the bedroom, and no more than 1-2 hours total per day.

2. Make a list of easy, everyday activities.

Since it can be hard to get some kids (and adults too!) off the couch, make a long list of fun activities that are close by, free or inexpensive, and easy-to-do as a family. They can be in your own backyard, around the neighborhood, or at a local park. Keep the list in an easy-to-access location - like on the fridge - and add more activities as you think of them.

3. Get equipped for active family fun.

Easy-to-use equipment is another great way to get your family off the couch and having fun. There's no need for brand-new, expensive stuff from a sports store or catalog. Check out the possibilities at used-equipment stores, thrift stores, and yard sales. Look for Frisbees®, balls, hula hoops, soft spongy stuff (like Nerf® and Koosh®), and sprinkler toys for summer fun.

4. Schedule time for weekend activity.

Weekend schedules can easily fill up with chores and errands. Make fun plans for plenty of activity early, especially on hot summer days. Use a family dinner in the middle of the week to discuss the possibilities. A hike in the mountains? A bike trip on the new trails in town? A little canoeing and fishing at the lake? A family treasure hunt (aka geocaching)?

5. Plan an active vacation.

If you're planning a family vacation or a stay-cation this year, make sure that some fun physical activity is built into every day. That's easy on a backpacking or camping trip, but also lots of fun if you are visiting relatives or touring a city. Just plan ahead: Check out the activity options online or in a guidebook - make active fun a family priority every day.