

4 Fun Ways to Give Moms the Gift of Fitness

Whether it's Mother's Day, a birthday, or just because you love her, fitness is the gift that keeps on giving to any mother or grandmother. Finding fun ways to help the mothers in your life get active will help insure that they are happy, healthy, strong, and around for years to come. Physical activity helps women be less depressed, reduce stress, lower disease risk, maintain healthy bones, and live long, productive lives. Best of all, it doesn't take hours in the gym to enjoy the impressive benefits of physical activity. Just 20 to 30 minutes a day can make a big difference at any age! Smart fitness always includes a variety of aerobic, strength, balance, and stretching activities.

Give the gift of **TIME** and **COMPANIONSHIP**.

One of the best ways to help someone get moving is to go with them. People are more likely to stick with an activity if they are accountable to someone else. Plus, almost anything is more fun when you have a family member or friend to do it with you. Children can create a handmade gift certificate with the promise of weekly bike rides or daily walks in the neighborhood. Adults can give the gift of training together for an upcoming event, like a walkathon for a favorite charity.

Give the gift of **AEROBICS**.

Think about the ways that your favorite mom enjoys being active - and give a gift to support that activity, such as a new pair of walking shoes or a new comfy seat for her bicycle. Consider the gift of a different kind of aerobic activity that you and she could enjoy together, such as ballroom or belly dancing lessons. Active clothing - comfortable, breathable, and in her favorite colors - is always a popular choice. For a super simple gift, pick out fun athletic socks with a wacky design.

Give the gift of **STRENGTH**.

Building strong muscles isn't just for bodybuilders and Olympic weight lifters. Moms - everyday athletes - need strength for their daily challenges, like carrying children and lugging laundry baskets. Help the moms in your life have fun getting stronger with some hand weights or a set of exercise bands. Really kick her fitness program into high gear with the gift of personal training sessions - in her home or at a local fitness center. (Double the fun by joining the sessions with her!)

Give the gift of **FLEXIBILITY** and **BALANCE**.

Most moms have hectic and stressful lives, especially when their children are small. Any physical activity can help with stress reduction - and give moms a breather from all their responsibilities. Yoga, Pilates, and tai chi classes are some of the best at relieving stress - while promoting flexibility and balance at the same time. Give a double duty gift with a certificate for classes, a DVD for home use, a yoga mat, a balance ball, or the promise to baby sit while she has some personal time.

NEED SOME FREE TIPS AND SUPPORT FOR A MORE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE? As part of *Go Red for Women*, the American Heart Association offers a free online physical activity program for women at www.choosetomove.org/ - with 12 weeks of motivating tips and information, as well as the personal stories of seven real women and their workout goals. The Wheat Foods Council also provides free tips at www.wheatfoods.org/Athlete-10/Index.htm, including nutrition information, great grain recipes, and getting fit ideas from their 2007 fitness event for Mom, the Everyday Athlete.