



# Make Exercise a Family Affair

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**T**ime is of the greatest essence in our hectic Singaporean lifestyle, and so it is often a challenge to find time to exercise. But busy parents can combine family time with exercise time.

Exercising as a family has many perks. It can double up as quality time and keep the family healthy together. There are other benefits too, namely better fitness, stress relief, weight control and fun!

Besides, inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. Making family activities and fitness part of your child's life at an early age can go a long way toward helping them form healthy habits for life. Research has also shown that children who exercise do better in school and have fewer behaviour problems.

Rather than have your children glued to the television or their iPads, get them to move away from a sedentary lifestyle at a young age and associate activity or exercise with togetherness and community.

When exercise feels like play, your whole family will enjoy it more and be more likely to stick with it. As a parent, you are a powerful role model.

If you find ways to be more active every day, your kids will follow your lead. All it takes a little commitment.

#### To get started, try these tips:

- **As a family, make a list of activities everyone can do and enjoy together during the week.**
- **Keep a family physical activity log.**
- **Plan something special that involves being active at the weekend, like a walk in one of our parks or a charity run.**

Bonding within the family can be done with a simple activity such as washing the car or taking an evening walk after dinner while talking about school and work. It does not need to be 30 minutes long; even 15 minutes is quality time. It is always heartwarming to see parents kicking ball or playing Frisbee or 'catching' with their children or participating in fun walks or runs together.

There are many recreational activities such as strolling or walking in the park which can be done by anyone of any age. If you've just had a new baby, take the baby in the pram and take a walk together. Generally, adults should work toward 10,000 steps a day. Children aged six to

12 need more steps — at least 12,000 for girls and at least 15,000 for boys. Other activities include walking the dog, cycling, rollerblading, swimming or rock climbing. Those with young children can join them in games like hopscotch, jump rope, and hide-and-seek.

To increase the intensity of the activity, consider hiking at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve or exploring Hort Park or 'The TreeTop Walk' which is accessible from MacRitchie Reservoir Park. Try exercising for a good cause and register the family for a charity walk or run. A number of such events are targeted at families.

Time waits for no man, or family. So, get moving with the children and enjoy!

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