

Spring Forward With Fun, Healthy Physical Activities For The Entire Family

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You made it through the shortest days of the year, and now that the days are longer, take time to add more physical activity to your family's day. Balancing your child's school day, homework and other activities can be hectic, but making small changes this spring can lead to big rewards. Before you know it, your family will become a more active and healthier bunch.

Parents are role models for their children. When your children see you eating right and being physically active, there's a good chance they'll do the same. Living a healthier, more physically active lifestyle doesn't require expensive sporting equipment or memberships. There are fun, creative ways to improve your family's physical activity habits.

To start, monitor your family's daily activities for one week. Identify times when your family could increase its physical activity. Each week, add more activity into your family's routine.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Play a game of tag instead of watching television.** Tag provides fun and physical activity. Children love it—especially if they can chase their parents—and it increases everyone's heart rate at the same time.

- **Start a family garden.** Begin getting the soil ready to plant flowers and vegetables. If you have limited space, try growing herbs in pots. Homegrown vegetables and herbs are great money savers and ensure you'll have something available for healthy summer meals and snacks. Fresh herbs are also a tasty alternative to salt when cooking.
- **Go old school.** Help your children draw hopscotch or four square courts on the sidewalk. Sidewalk chalk is a colorful and inexpensive way for children to create their own activity space.
- **Plan a nature scavenger hunt.** Pick up small nets and mason jars for kids to use to catch butterflies or interesting insects, and collect flowers in the neighborhood or at a local park.
- **Help your children organize a neighborhood softball or kickball game with their friends.** Pitch in by planning healthy snacks and drinks to keep everyone energized during games.

Start with small steps to get your family to move more. Making little changes can help everyone maintain a healthy weight. For more tips on how to help your family live a healthier lifestyle, visit the **We Can!** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)[®] website: wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov.