



Summer Shines on Busy Schedules

Summertime often means lots of time to play and fun with families, but it can also be a time where you are so on-the-go that there is not enough time for needed exercise! Physical activity is important for children and adults of all ages, all through the seasons, rain or shine. According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, adults need 2 ½ hours a week of physical activity and children need 60 minutes a day. Follow these tips to add more planned activity to your family's busy schedule:

- 1. Set family activity times.** Set aside time at the beginning of the week to figure out when everyone is available to be together. Make those times available for fun and healthy activities to do with your family. Go to the Farmer's Market, stop at the playground, or go bowling on a rainy day, but most importantly, get up and get moving together!
- 2. Plan and track your progress.** Make planning your activity time as important as when the next ball game is and put it on your calendar! Have the kids help plan the fun and let them check it off when it's done! A dry-erase board in an easy to reach location is a terrific way to make additions and subtractions to your family fun time.
- 3. Working around the house counts, too!** Physical activity does not always mean a ball game or a swimming event. Getting up and getting moving might also include planting a garden or digging in the dirt. Little kids love to pretend they are mowing the lawn. Watering the flowers can be fun, too, especially if it turns into a cool water fight on a sizzling summer day!
- 4. Use what you can to keep moving.** What can you do with the time you have? If you must drop off a child at ball practice, use that time for a walk when you get there. Bring a Frisbee along and play a fun catch and toss game with your other children. Bring a stroller along if you have little ones and use that time for some old fashioned "I Spy" while you walk.
- 5. Learn new skills together.** Take a painting class, learn how to dance, or play golf. Help the kids practice and it will help keep things fun and interesting for the whole family.
- 6. Watch the skies!** Summertime means lots to do outside but make sure you know if you need to plan to be inside. Have a plan for all weather conditions in case things change. Indoor swimming, baking days and shopping trips might be good plans for inside days.
- 7. Turn off the TV!** Focus on the lens of photography instead! You do not need fancy cameras any more as smartphones can take good pictures, too! Go for a walk and explore nature, and let your kids take pictures of what they think looks amazing to them.
- 8. Start small with your list of summer fun.** Do not try to do too much at once. Start adding in new activities as you see family members are ready. Try to take the dog for a longer walk or add in a new class, little by little. You do not want to wear out before you even begin!
- 9. Include others in your family fun!** This is a wonderful way for your kids to spend time with friends. Walk to the library together, sign up for a 5K run, or have a picnic lunch. It is always more fun when you do things together.
- 10. Treat this as family fun, not exercise!** Remember, anytime you can do things together, it is something to celebrate! Plan a trip to the zoo, park or lake and focus on the fun of being active together.



Source: Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**For more information check out
Food Fun on the Run at:
<http://go.unl.edu/familyrun>**