

Q. How can I get my family to be more active?

A. Before you can get them moving, there's something you need to know. Screen time has a big pull on kids. On average, kids ages 8 to 18 spend an estimated 6 to 9 hours a day staring at a screen.¹

Less screen time means you'll have more time for other things, like being active. Make sense? Getting regular exercise can help you and your family:

- Maintain a healthy weight or lose weight
- Improve heart health
- Build stronger bones and muscles
- Prevention chronic diseases
- And more.

Ready to make exercise a family affair? Here are some simple ways to be more active:²

Be an example

It starts with you. Make time to exercise, walk, ride a bike, work in the yard, or go to the gym.³

- When your kids see that exercise is important to you, they will be more inclined to model your behavior.
- The opposite is true as well. One recent study found that children with overweight or obese parents are about twice as likely to be overweight or obese as adults.⁴

Plan active family time

The average adult spends 7-plus hours a day in front of a screen



(computer, phone, tablet). If you want to be more active, swap some of that screen time with physical activity and make a plan...

Cut back on screen time, even if it's just an hour, and plan to do something active, like:

- Take a walk.
- Go for a hike.
- Ride bikes.
- Play a game of Frisbee at the park.
- Try something new together like basketball, volleyball, table tennis, or swimming.

You don't need to do a lot of planning to be more active as a family. Park farther from the store and walk. If you're at the mall or airport, take the stairs instead of the escalator.

Turn chores into games

Household chores don't have to ruin your day. Turn your to-do list into a game.

Get your family involved and see how fast you all can:

- Weed the garden
- Walk the dog
- Vacuum the house
- Put away groceries
- Take out the garbage
- Clean the bathroom
- Fold and put away laundry

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

You'll burn extra calories by being more active, and you'll get the chores out of the way for more family fun time.

Move More + Sit Less = Live Longer

One recent study found that just 20 minutes of moderate exercise per day cuts your risk for early death by 21 percent. Bump that to 40-plus minutes per day and the risk of early death drops by 31 percent.⁵

Helping your family be more active is a lifestyle choice. Encourage them, be consistent, and make it fun.

References

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