

Extension

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Stop Trying to Exercise... and Just Get Moving!

By Sheila Gains, Family and Consumer Science Agent Arapahoe County

Being physically active burns calories and builds strong muscles. It also relieves stress, improves balance and strengthens bones. But the word exercise causes adults and youth alike to cringe. It can be like medicine, you don't like it but you do it, because it is good for you.

So, stop that old way of thinking about exercise and just find ways you can keep yourself and your kids moving.

What sounds like fun?

- It might be swimming, walking, hiking, dancing, or playing kick ball
- How about a game of tag, hide and seek or some jump-rope games
- Instead of a family night at the movies, host a family night of bowling, etc.
- Like most families you probably have lots of things you need to get done everyday, laundry, dishes etc., but don't let that stop you from being more active

Some families are more successful if they try to add more movement into everyday tasks. Try doing toe touches and stretching when picking up toys and dusting. Another idea is to have everyone do biceps curls with the cans of food, while helping you unload and putting them away. Get creative.

Other families benefit from planning to take fitness/activity breaks several times a day. It's like rewarding yourself for completing household tasks. For example, as soon as you sort the laundry and get one load in the washer, gather up the kids and go for a walk or bike ride. If the kids know what needs to get done before you can head out, they might even pitch in so the fun can begin sooner.

Let's Talk:

Make a commitment to help your family live a healthy active life. Set a goal of being physically active for one or more hours per day. As a family make a plan of how and when it will happen. Making physical activity fun is the key to sticking with your plan and getting the whole family involved. If it's not fun, try something else. Don't worry if you miss a day, "life happens". Be a positive example for your kids and you might be surprised by what they learn.



In 2009 just 64 % of Colorado school-age children participated in vigorous physical activity for four or more days a week. Source: The Colorado Health Foundation's 2009 Colorado Health Report Card.

Recipe for Health:

Take a Banana Split Break... *Kids will find this is an "a-peeling" snack*

Ingredients: *Serves 2*

- 1 banana
- ½ cup crunchy nugget cereal
- ½ cup low fat, flavored yogurt (vanilla, peach strawberry etc.)
- Or ½ cup low fat cottage cheese
- ½ cup pineapple tidbits or chunks, canned in fruit juice
- Maraschino cherries, optional

Directions:

1. Peel and split banana lengthwise and place each half in a separate banana split dish or cereal bowl.

On each serving:

2. Spoon ¼ cup of flavored yogurt or cottage cheese over banana.
3. Spread ¼ cup pineapple over yogurt.
4. Sprinkle ¼ cup cereal on top.
5. Decorate with cherry.

Adapted from Breakfast Banana Split, Kids-a-Cookin, K-State Research and Extension.

