

Fitness is Fun!

Exercise is essential. Regular exercise helps us strengthen our hearts, lungs, and muscles so that we stay healthy and strong. Luckily for us, exercise can be super-fun!

It is recommended that we get at least 60 minutes of exercise a day. While that may seem like a lot, there are lots of fun activities you can do as a family to exercise together.



- **Aerobic exercise** makes you breathe hard and gets your heart pumping. Examples include jumping rope, playing basketball, throwing a Frisbee, doing jumping jacks, jogging, biking, jumping over a basketball on the ground, or having a dance party.

- **Strength Training** increases the amount of muscle in your body and burns more calories. Examples include lifting actual weights or food cans, lunges, squats, push-ups and planks, core lifts, or step-ups on a step or a sturdy box.



- **Flexibility exercise (or stretching)** helps the body to stay loose and helps it to recover after exercise. Focus on flexibility a little every day for at least five minutes. Move around a bit before you begin to stretch so that you are aware of how much you are stretching and don't overdo it. Examples include yoga, reaching to the sky, touching your toes, clasping your hand or elbows behind your back, or stretching your arms and feet wide apart in a giant star shape.

- **You can combine all three types of exercise!** Try walking fast while carrying small weights, or stretching with a resistance band while lifting weights.

Exercise Tips:

- Many chores can be made into exercise activities! Challenge your youth to take the trash out or clean his/her room as fast as possible, vacuum while dancing to headphones, or skip while walking a pet or going to the store.
- Drink plenty of water before, some during, and plenty after you work out, particularly if you feel thirsty before working out. Remember that sports drinks are mostly sugar-- if you work out for less than an hour, you usually just need water.
- It's important to have a snack with some carbohydrates about an hour before working out so that you don't get too tired to exercise. Try something light to eat, like an apple or some whole grain crackers
- Proper snacking after exercise can encourage healthy muscle growth and prevent burnout. A great snack has protein (for muscle building) and carbohydrates (for energy). Try a trail mix made with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and dry cereal or a peanut butter and banana sandwich.