

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

Issue 2, December 2013

Physical Activities the Whole Family Can Enjoy

Presented by:

Introduction

Shared physical activity is something the entire family can rally around and it's important because of the many health benefits it can provide. According to a 2011 study published in the journal *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, family support and encouragement, behavior modeling and home-based resources can encourage regular participation in physical activity (and healthy eating habits) in adolescents.¹ But the importance of families on parents' physical activity levels and diet is significant, too. Indeed, shared physical activity with loved ones can lead to a positive feedback loop that reinforces healthy, lifelong behaviors in all family members.

In this edition of the Wellness Express, we will review four specific activities that offer significant health benefits for the entire family. Your chiropractor can suggest even more activities that may be well-suited to your family's interests and health considerations.

Indoor Rock Climbing

Indoor climbing gyms offer a safe and controlled environment in which all family members can experience physical health benefits. Indoor rock climbing as a family activity can be both fun and physically challenging and it can help family members (especially kids) overcome their fears (whether it be a fear of heights or a fear



of failure in sport). Indoor rock climbing allows each family member to choose their own level of difficulty and progress at their own, natural pace, making gains in strength, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness and dexterity along the way. Indoor rock climbing can help teach both children and adults the importance of joy in movement and that you don't necessarily need to compete against others to derive fulfillment from sports or physical activities.

Hiking

Hiking is a great family activity because it involves being in nature for prolonged periods (away from computer screens and electronic



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Exercise of the Week

Glute Stretch (Figure 4)

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before doing this or any other exercise.)

Start: Seated on a chair.

Exercise: Place one ankle on opposite knee. Then, bend forward until you feel a good stretch in hip. Also relax lower back in this position. Hold for 30-60 seconds, and then return to starting position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



devices) as well the chance to boost sagging energy levels. Hiking through nature gives parents the opportunity to help their children interpret nature, but it also gives parents a chance to see the natural world through the eyes of their children; a refreshing experience for many adults who are used to seeing the world through their own lens. Hiking, especially if it incorporates trekking poles and undulating terrain, is a moderately strenuous physical activity with real health and fitness benefits. Adding a scavenger hunt or orienteering session into the mix can spice things up and teach children both leadership and outdoors skills.

Gardening

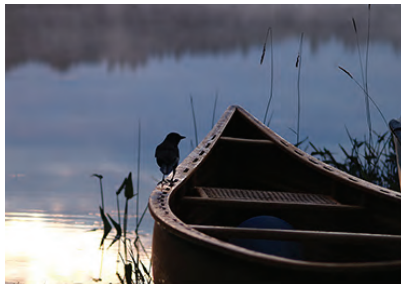
Gardening is an outdoor physical activity that can bring families together for a common goal, create a strong sense of togetherness or camaraderie and improve the overall health and fitness of all family members. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gardening can be an effective way for families to enjoy the outdoors, get physical exercise, improve community aesthetics and grow tasty and nutritious fruits and veggies.² Gardening involves numerous weight-bearing activities, such as pulling weeds, digging holes, pushing a mower and carrying soil in a wheelbarrow, as well as other tasks (hoeing, raking, etc.) that recruit large muscle groups and temporarily elevate heart rate - a necessity for improving cardiovascular health.



Canoeing

A popular summer leisure activity, canoeing offers families the chance to get away from it all and experience clean, oxygen-fueled activity in a

natural setting. The Better Health website notes that canoeing is a low-impact physical activity that can boost cardiovascular fitness, flexibility and strength (especially in the back, arms, shoulders, and chest).³ The website



also notes that canoeing can be peaceful and meditative or exhilarating. This family oriented activity can also teach children about water safety and it encourages an appreciation of our waterways' health.

Considerations

The Let's Move! website notes that setting clear goals for physical activity (e.g., jogging for 30 minutes, three times per week) is more effective in engaging family members than simply making a group promise to exercise more.⁴ Some activity is better than none at all, notes the American College of Sports Medicine, so consider using whatever time you have available to you in the morning or evening (even if it's just 10 minutes here or 20 minutes there) for exercise.⁵ Consider talking with your chiropractor about other ways of motivating your family members to participate in shared physical activity. He or she will have other suggestions you may not already have considered.



Quote to Inspire

"Exercise is one of the best ways in preventing the rapid growth of obesity in

Lee Haney

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