



Healthy Family Home™

A community partnership with the YMCA

Make Your Family Activities Count!

Making changes in your family behavior doesn't happen overnight, but by incorporating fun activities that are also good for the health of your family into your every day routine you can make it a little easier.

Pick one of these activities (or another activity from the Healthy Family Home™ Starter Kit*) each day and each member of your family can add 500 extra steps to their daily total for America On the Move Week with the YMCA.

Play Every Day

Track Your Fun: Wear a pedometer (a gadget that counts your steps) and track your movement. Everyone in the family can wear them and compare steps at the end of the day. Set goals or have contests. You can even give out prizes for the most steps in one day or one week.

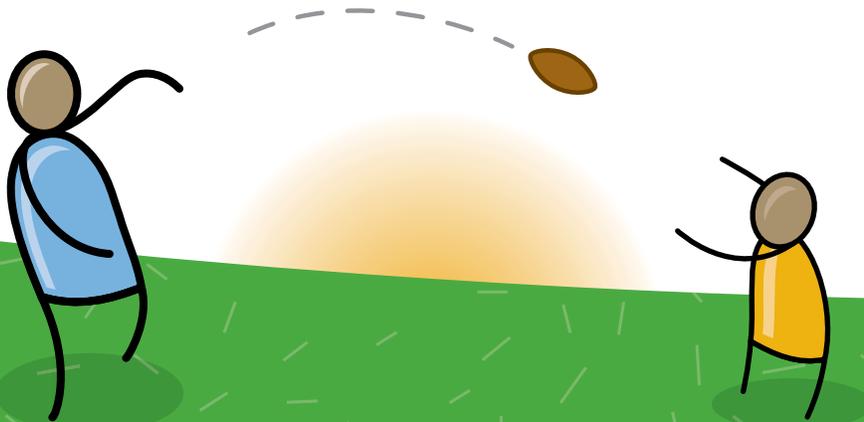
The Great Outdoors: Search for a park or trail near your home and plan for a family hike. Pack a healthy sack lunch and make a day out of it.

Shop the Walk: Take a family trip to the mall, but make it a rule that before you can go into a store, you must first walk a lap around the entire mall. Window-shop as you go.

Leave the Car Behind: Plan a weekly family breakfast (or other outing) in which you are the transportation. Skip the car, bus, or train and ride bikes, walk, or jog/run. Make getting there a physical activity.

Advocate for Activity: Encourage your child's school to ensure that students receive at least 30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. Recommendations call for children to receive at least 150 minutes/week for elementary school and at least 225 minutes/week for middle school and high school. You can also ask your neighborhood school to keep facilities open to the community during non-school hours. Making playgrounds, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and "all purpose rooms" available for open play or for organized sport programs expands opportunities for activity in areas that don't have adequate play spaces.

Walk to School: If you live close enough, find a way for kids to walk or bike to school. Organize a weekly "walk to school" day or walking school bus where parents in your neighborhood take turns walking kids to school. Kids in middle grades can head out with a friend or sibling, and younger ones with a grown-up.



Eat Healthy

Favorite Meal Night: Have family members make over their favorite meal recipe to add healthy ingredients or healthy preparation methods and pick a special night each week to present the “fave” meal. Maybe every Thursday night is “Favorite Meal Night” and you rotate as a family who’s recipe/meal will be prepared, older kids can do the preparation and even serve the meal. Pick a meal time that works for the whole family.

Fruity Family: Have all family members identify their favorite fruit, draw pictures of them or write them down and make one list. Then, fill a bowl or basket with those fruits and make it a “family fruit bowl” and keep it on the table, counter or in the refrigerator. This way, everyone in the family will have easy access to their favorite fruit when they’re looking for a snack.

Healthy Pie: No, not that kind of pie, but pizza pie. Order your pizza with extra sauce, easy on the cheese, meat-free and with extra vegetables (broccoli, tomatoes, green peppers, onions, spinach, artichokes, etc.). Be creative. Some pizza parlors even offer a whole wheat crust.

It’s easy to be Veggie: It’s easy to add veggies! Fill your soups, stews, or chili with more vegetables by adding a bag of mixed frozen vegetables. You can even try pureeing vegetables so they’ll blend in better—and you might not even know they’re there. Add sprouts, cucumbers and tomatoes to sandwiches. Dip blanched (slightly cooked) or raw vegetables in hummus for a tasty snack.

Family Time

Volunteering is Healthy for Everyone: Volunteer together somewhere that interest the whole family—maybe a local soup kitchen, a walk/race event, animal shelter, or an assisted living home.

Family Activity Night: Designate one evening a week a family activity night. Go bowling, swimming, roller skating, or play ping pong, tennis, basketball, etc. You can even take a class involving physical activity. Find something everyone likes or will try or is interested in practicing.

Logging the Love: Keep a log of family time spent together each day. Record who was there, what you did, and what you talked about. At the end of the week, go over the log as a family. You might be surprised at how easy (or how difficult) it was to find time to be together. If you continue to keep a log, it might help you to schedule more time together as a family.

Our Healthy Family Home Scrap Book: Start a scrap book to capture the family improving the home.

- draw pictures of every one, include recent photographs if available
- begin capturing photos of the family cooking and eating together
- collect photos of family members participating in physical activity
- take a group/family photo every month and add to scrap book

View the Food Instead: Turn off the TV during family meal time. Give your time and attention to each other instead. Talk about the Healthy Family Home activities you did earlier that day.

***More tips are available online and in the Starter Kit, which can be downloaded for free at www.HealthyFamilyHome.org**

