

## Eliminating Sedentary Behavior and Encouraging Children to be More Physically Active

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### Introduction

No matter what age you are, being physically active has many health advantages. Helping children develop and grow into healthy adults is particularly important. Every day, the American Heart Association recommends that children and teenagers (ages 6-17) engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity.

It can be difficult to get your children to put down their tablets and do something active in today's digital world. However, with a little effort, we can assist them in developing healthy behaviour and discovering things that they can enjoy for the rest of their lives.

### Why is it important for children to be physically active?

Increased physical activity is linked to a longer life expectancy and a lower risk of many illnesses and health conditions in children, just as it is in adults. To put it another way, you'll live a longer and happier life! There are several advantages that may cater to children's competitive nature and ability to succeed.

Children who are active are more likely to have:

- maintaining a healthy weight
- better heart and brain health
- improved brain function, including memory, attention and problem-solving
- improved school attendance and academic performance, especially in math, reading, and writing
- lower long-term risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancer
- stronger, healthier bones and muscles
- reduced stress and anxiety and depression symptoms
- less inappropriate and disruptive classroom activity
- better mental wellbeing and psychological well-being, including trust and self-esteem

### How can we get our children to be more active?

Children are born to be active. They become less interested as they mature into teenagers. This is particularly true for girls, who may need additional motivation and support to remain involved. Don't be surprised if your children's priorities change or if they lose interest in things, they once enjoyed. Instead of being inactive, assist them in finding other things they would enjoy. Here are a few pointers that might be useful:

- Set an example for a healthy lifestyle. Get yourself moving more and find opportunities to be active as a family.
- Physical activity for children and teenagers should be enjoyable. Encourage kids to try a variety of things before they find one, they like and can stick with. Use physical exercise as a reward rather than a punishment.
- Restrict or eliminate sedentary screen time, such as watching television, playing video games, or using a computer. Using the TV or a device as a substitute for a babysitter.
- Enable children to participate in physical activities. Icycle, skateboards, roller skates, scooters, jump ropes, hoops, and

sports equipment are examples of active toys and games.

- Encourage them to participate in sports, dance, and other physical activities such as swimming, riding, and running. Get to know the neighborhood's community amenities, such as pools, fitness centres, bike paths, and parks.
- Instead of always pushing them in the car, let them walk or bike places when it is safe. You might, for example, walk or ride your bikes to school or to the bus stop together.
- Proceed slowly if your child is currently inactive. Every week or so, gradually increase the amount and intensity of your exercise. This could help them prevent pain or injury while also allowing them to adapt to a more active lifestyle without being discouraged.
- Praise, incentives and motivation inspire children to be involved.

### What if kids are clumsy, have a disability, or are overweight?

Physical activity is important for all children, including those with special needs. Children with a disability or a weight problem can benefit from physical and psychological activity in particular. Encourage them to be as involved as they can. Avoid comparing them to other kids or shaming them if they can't do anything. Honor their accomplishments and successes. Above all, stay healthy and have a good time!

This exercise not only increases muscle mass, tones muscles, and strengthens the bones. But also helps you maintain the strength you need for everyday activities like lifting groceries, climbing stairs, rising from a chair, or rushing for the bus. It significantly decreases the risk of type 2 diabetes in men and osteoporosis in women. It improves physical performance, movement control, walking speed, functional independence, cognitive abilities and self-esteem.

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