



Parent Pages



RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Life Together: **Keeping It Healthy**

The theme for this year has been “Life Together” based on this verse: “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 COR. 1:9).

As the school year ends, let us consider one more important activity that creates family fellowship and honors the gifts God has given us.

Ever since the dawn of radio, man has been inventing new technology that encourages sitting. This century is no exception. While God gave us bodies that sit, it does seem He created us to spend most of our day moving. Summertime is a great time to make plans for family exercise. The activities you model for your children and the things you do together as a family are the lessons that make the strongest impressions.

Exercise has benefits beyond what it can do for bones and muscles. Children who exercise have more energy, sleep better at night, process information better and maintain a better overall mood. Consider some of these options:

- Biking and hiking are great family activities. Children out walking or riding in the neighborhood will develop visual spatial skills as they create maps in their brains. Both of these activities can allow for family discussion time and exploration. Consider recording your journeys on a city map, so your children can see the places they have visited. Building up endurance through these activities will come in handy when you are on a family vacation. Lasting all day will literally feel like a walk in the park.
- A 10-minute dance party can be a great way to burn off energy after sitting in the car or on the couch. Choose a few wild songs that signal everyone within earshot to do a crazy dance. You might be surprised at how well this works to dispel grumpy moods after sibling spats.
- Chores can be a source of exercise as well. Setting the table, taking out the garbage, carrying clean clothes, helping with grocery shopping, mowing the lawn and walking the dog are all good ways to encourage



exercise. In addition to health benefits, you also are developing a sense of responsibility.

- Setting exercise goals will contribute greatly to developing what teachers refer to as metacognition skills. These skills of planning, motivation and evaluation are essential to real learning. Work with your children to design an exercise program for the summer. Then talk about setting goals and finding a way to evaluate progress. Check out the link at the end of this article for fitness apps that can keep track of time spent moving. (Avoid those apps that post location on social media sites, as this is not safe for children.) Just think about all the math skills you can sneak into this activity. Do not be afraid to engage in some parent/child competition.
- One source of exercise we often overlook is unstructured playtime. A couple of kids with some balls, jump ropes, cardboard boxes or even large sticks can manage to find many ways to keep moving. Also, they will be practicing great science as they launch balls or use sticks as levers. Provide your kids with a couple of shovels and a corner of the yard where they can dig. You just might end up with a landscape pond.
- Team sports are always a good option for exercise. In addition to developing athletic skills, sports also increase self-confidence and a sense of belonging. If your child plays on a team with a perceptive coach who uses mistakes as tools for learning, your child also will grow in the skill of resilience. Over the long term, resilience is far better than a trophy.
- Martial arts are not only an excellent source of exercise, they also are especially suitable for children who lack self-control or focus. Martial arts help children set and monitor goals and develop self-regulation over body, emotion and attentional focus.



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“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 COR. 6:19B-20).

Exercise is a way to strengthen body, mind and character. It can develop strong bones, flexibility and endurance; support academic and social skills; develop healthy life habits; build family relationships; and, as this verse indicates, glorify God. We thank God for the gift of exercise and its many benefits.

For Further Study

Here is a list of free fitness apps to use technology to keep kids fit: [alwaysactiveathletics.com/5-free-health-fitness-kids/](https://www.alwaysactiveathletics.com/5-free-health-fitness-kids/).

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