

HEALTH & FITNESS



- Form healthy habits
- Beat the heat
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HOW TO ESTABLISH fitness goals for kids

Physical activity benefits people of all ages, including kids. Despite widespread recognition of the positive impact physical activity has on children, many kids are not getting enough exercise.

In an analysis of data collected as part of the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that less than one in four children between the ages of six and 17 participates in 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

When established in childhood and adolescence, good habits like exercising regularly can set young people up for a long, healthy life. Perhaps in recognition of that, parents often look for ways to promote physical activity to their youngsters.

Setting fitness goals is one way to help young people exercise more, and the following are a handful of strategies

parents can try as they seek to promote a love of physical activity in their children.

Include fun activities

Adults recognize the importance of planning when aspiring to achieve certain goals, and a plan can be just as integral to getting kids to be more physically active.

When devising a fitness plan, parents should be sure to include activities kids find fun. Just because Dad liked playing baseball doesn't mean his children will. Identify activities that kids enjoy, whether it's hiking or cycling or playing an organized sport, and include that in the fitness plan.

Involve kids' friends

Parents often make exercising a family affair, but a 2015 study led by a researcher

affiliated with Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center found that children who exercised with friends were far less likely to cite barriers such as lack of enjoyment or lack of energy as reasons for not exercising. In essence, kids are more inspired to exercise with friends than they are with family members.

When establishing fitness goals for kids, parents can work with other parents so kids can pursue those goals together, increasing the chances that those pursuits will be successful.

Set aside time

Physical activity should be part of everyone's daily routine, and kids are no exception. Such activity does not need to be a grueling workout, and indeed children's bodies will need time to recover

after especially strenuous exercise. But setting aside time each day to be physically active is a good way to ensure kids' lifestyles are not predominantly sedentary.

Make the goals attainable

Parents may know before kids begin exercising or notice shortly after they start being more physically active how much kids can reasonably handle. The YMCA notes that's an important factor to consider, as fitness goals should be attainable so anyone adjusting to a new regimen, even kids, stays motivated. A child's pediatrician can advise on how much exercise youngsters should get each day, and parents can help kids gradually reach that point by setting challenging but attainable goals.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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above: Regular physical activity can benefit kids for the rest of their lives. Parents can pitch in by embracing various strategies to help kids establish attainable goals that make fitness fun.

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LESSER KNOWN BENEFITS OF **BREAKING A SWEAT**

Most people know that routine exercise does a body good. While it may not require a degree from medical school to know that exercise can be a great way to lose weight and reduce risk for various illnesses, there's even more beneficial side effects of regular exercise that might surprise even the most ardent fitness enthusiasts.

Exercise produces positive psychological benefits

WebMD notes that there are several psychological benefits of routine exercise. Those benefits occur because exercise triggers the release of endorphins, which are hormones that interact with receptors in the brain that reduce a person's perception of pain. Some additional psychological benefits of exercise include stress reduction and prevention of anxiety and depression.

Regular exercise can benefit your career

A 2012 study published in the Journal of Labor Research linked regular exercise with an annual wage increase between 6 and 10 percent. Researchers found that moderate exercise yields a positive earnings effect, but individuals who exercised frequently had even higher wage increases.

Exercise can improve your social life

WebMD also notes that routine exercise can improve self-esteem, which can make it



Many people feel a significant sense of accomplishment by the end of a vigorous workout. Such feelings could grow even more profound when individuals recognize the many lesser known benefits of breaking a sweat.

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easier for people to connect with others. A 2017 study published in the Journal of Sports Economics concluded that participation in sports activities can induce prosocial behaviors. Though participation in sports is often promoted as a great way for kids to make new friends, the social aspect of exercise and sports participation is no less

beneficial for adults.

Exercise can benefit long-term cognitive health

Though the reasons remain unclear, there seems to be a link between regular physical activity and long-term cognitive

health. A 2017 study published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease found that regular exercise can positively influence cognitive ability, reduce the rate of cognitive aging and lower the risk for certain dementias, including Alzheimer's disease.

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Healthy Habits

Break unhealthy ones and create positive change

It's an experience shared by many: You make an ambitious health goal and a few months – or weeks – later, you lose steam and throw in the towel. Break the cycle by focusing on simple, yet effective ways you can impact your wellness long term.

The key? Small daily habits. Nicholas Frye, MS, LCPC, CHES, behavioral counseling manager at OPTAVIA and an expert on psychological factors that influence health, shares how you can create lasting healthy habits, break those unhealthy ones and create positive changes to your wellbeing:

Forming new habits

Habits are a fundamental part of the health and wellbeing program, OPTAVIA.

Its approach is built around four key components: a supportive community, an independent coach, a blueprint for learning and mastering healthy habits, and easy nutrition.

“Forming a new, healthy habit involves repeating a health-promoting behavior in response to some trigger that’s already a part of your day, such as a specific location like the kitchen, certain situation like making your morning coffee or particular person like your significant other, until there is a learned connection between trigger and behavior,” said Frye.

As an example, to develop a new, healthy walking habit, first select a specific health-promoting behavior such as “go for a 10-minute walk.” Then identify a stable cue which occurs daily in your life such as “after breakfast.” Then repeatedly perform the walking behavior in response to the after-breakfast cue which will, over time, result in an automatic habit.

It takes 66 days – on average – to develop a new habit, according to a 2009 study published in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

However, the exact timeframe is different for everyone. As the behavior is repeated in response to the cue, the association between them becomes stronger, more efficient and automatic until the cue alone is enough to trigger the associated behavior without conscious thought.

Breaking old habits

Forming new, healthy habits through behavior and cue association is one part of a long-term approach to wellness, but how do you break an established, negative health habit?

“Breaking an old, unhealthy habit involves overwriting the old habit with a new, competing behavior,” Frye said. “Basically, you substitute the unhealthy habit with a healthy new one.”

For example, to break a habit of drinking sugary sodas while watching television, replace the soft drink with sparkling water every time you sit down to binge your favorite show. Eventually, you’ll associate watching TV with this

new, healthier behavior.

Microhabits

Frye recommends instead of committing to a big, audacious goal, try incorporating small daily habits. This allows you one step closer to optimal health and wellbeing every day. These small behaviors are called microhabits and they can compound to have big results.

Some microhabit examples are parking at the back of a parking lot to get your steps in or taking a sip of water as soon as you wake up rather than hitting the snooze button.

“By developing these habits, one small step at a time, we can overcome the intention-behavior gap - in other words, when what you do doesn’t live up to your previous intentions – and it is all the less daunting,” said Frye. “This sets one up for success as opposed to overly ambitious goals that don’t guide you from point A to point B.”

Learn more at [OPTAVIA.com](https://optavia.com).

(BPT)



Hydrating is key in summer heat

Summer is a season to enjoy some fun in the sun, but it's imperative that people remember to take steps to reduce their risk for heat illness. Those measures should include efforts to hydrate and remain hydrated throughout the day.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that water will almost always help people remain hydrated even when they're working in the heat. But food also plays a vital role in preventing heat illness, as the CDC notes eating regular meals can help to replace the salt lost through sweat. It's also important that individuals avoid energy drinks and alcohol when spending time in the hot summer sun.

Many energy drinks contain more caffeine than standard servings of coffee, tea and soft drinks, and excessive caffeine consumption can contribute to dehydration. The same can be said for alcohol, and the CDC reports that consuming alcohol within 24 hours of working in the heat can increase the risk of heat illness.

(METRO CREATIVE)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that water will almost always help people remain hydrated even when they're working in the heat.

STOCK PHOTO Health & Fitness

Expert tips from a dietitian to improve your health and fitness

Warm weather is quickly approaching, and there's no better time to kick off a new wellness routine as you prepare for three months of fun in the sun. Improve your lifestyle just in time for summer by making smarter choices and simple swaps when it comes to snacking, meals and fitness habits.

To help you get started, registered dietitian Kristin Kirkpatrick, M.S., who has partnered with and endorsed the Quest brand, offers a few practical suggestions on ways to continue enjoying the flavors you love while also sticking to your overall wellness goals.

Start swapping your snacks now

Making a few simple swaps that are easy to incorporate into your daily routine will make a big difference come summer.

"Chips and guacamole may seem like the perfect warm-weather pairing, but those high-carb dippers can add up fast, possibly making energy levels tank," said Kirkpatrick.

Instead, keep the healthy fat that guacamole provides, but swap out the dipper. For example, the new Quest Hot & Spicy Protein Chips pack plenty of the flavor and crunch that you want in a snack, without a ton of carbs. They can even add to your protein content for the day, with 19 grams of protein per bag.

Take advantage of seasonal produce

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy all the bounty that nature has to offer. Salads are the perfect meal when tasty, fresh local produce becomes widely available and backyard gardens start producing.

"If your salads were getting a little ho-hum over the winter, now's the time to spruce them up and get creative by experimenting with a wider variety of fresh ingredients," Kirkpatrick noted. "Get the whole family involved by growing an edible garden together or visiting your local farmers market for inspiration."

Swap the romaine you used all winter for arugula, and switch out the dried cranberries you were piling on for hempseed or shredded edishes. Soon you'll be able to mix in even more fresh colors and flavors with ripe blueberries or strawberries. Consider adding more herbs to your salads, too. Search for fresh basil and mint at your farmers market or grow some of your own!

"Get a protein boost by adding chicken and shrimp fresh off the grill, or hard-boiled eggs and garbanzo beans when you need something quick," says Kirkpatrick.

Make simple lifestyle changes

Better health can start today by



following new wellness routines. Start by eating more colorful veggies and fruits every day (so you're getting more phytonutrients), focus on better sleep - aim for seven hours a night - and start moving more whenever possible.

The warmer weather and extended daylight hours provide the ideal opportunity to fit more activity into each day. Start today and get your fitness level up by signing up for a short race, or spend time swimming, cycling or walking

outdoors with friends and family.

"The best thing about the warmer months is that you don't have to spend all your time cooped up in the gym to improve your fitness," added Kirkpatrick. "Spending more time outdoors, whether you're playing with the kids or working in the yard, will help you become more active."

Visit QuestNutrition.com for more snacking options as you enjoy the warm weather.

What to do when a workout grows stale

Exercise is one of the foundations of a healthy lifestyle. Routine exercise can help individuals reduce their risk for various illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, and can even have a positive effect on mental health.

Making a commitment to routine exercise can be an adjustment for people accustomed to a sedentary lifestyle. But even the most devoted fitness enthusiasts will face certain hurdles on their exercise journeys. One such obstacle is a stale workout.

Repeating the same exercises each day for months on end can grow boring, and that boredom may put individuals' commitment to fitness in jeopardy. If a workout has grown stale, the following strategies might help people stay on a healthy track.

DON'T WAIT FOR A WORKOUT TO GROW STALE

The most effective way to overcome a stale workout routine is to avoid it entirely. Switching up a routine every four to six weeks can provide enough change to avoid the boredom that can develop after following the same regimen for weeks. Strength-training regimens can shift from focusing on building muscle to toning muscle.

Various fitness experts note that fewer repetitions with more weight is a great way to build muscle, while more reps with less weight can help to tone muscle. Switching back and forth between these approaches can help to avoid exercise boredom. With cardiovascular training, skip the treadmill on nice days in favor of cycling or jogging outdoors.

ESTABLISH NEW GOALS

Fitness goals can provide all the motivation individuals need to commit to an exercise regimen. But interest can wane after such goals have been achieved. That's why it's important to continue setting new goals.

When establishing new fitness goals, don't forget to consider the fun factor. Pursuit of a goal that's fun will likely be more engaging, so identify some goals that will be effective and enjoyable.

BRING OTHERS ON BOARD

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that individuals tend to feel more motivated and they're more likely to try new activities when working out with a partner.

Individuals who have been going it alone with their fitness regimens might find involving others can make workouts less boring, and the presence of another person can make it safer for individuals to expand their exercise horizons. For example, a person can safely lift more weight if another person is always there to serve as a spotter.

WORK WITH A PERSONAL TRAINER

Personal trainers and other fitness professionals recognize that workout boredom is as big a hurdle as anything in regard to committing to a healthy lifestyle. In recognition of that, personal trainers often know how to switch up a routine so it produces results and remains engaging. Trainers also have the knowledge to tweak routines so they play to clients' interests and strengths.

(METRO CREATIVE)



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