

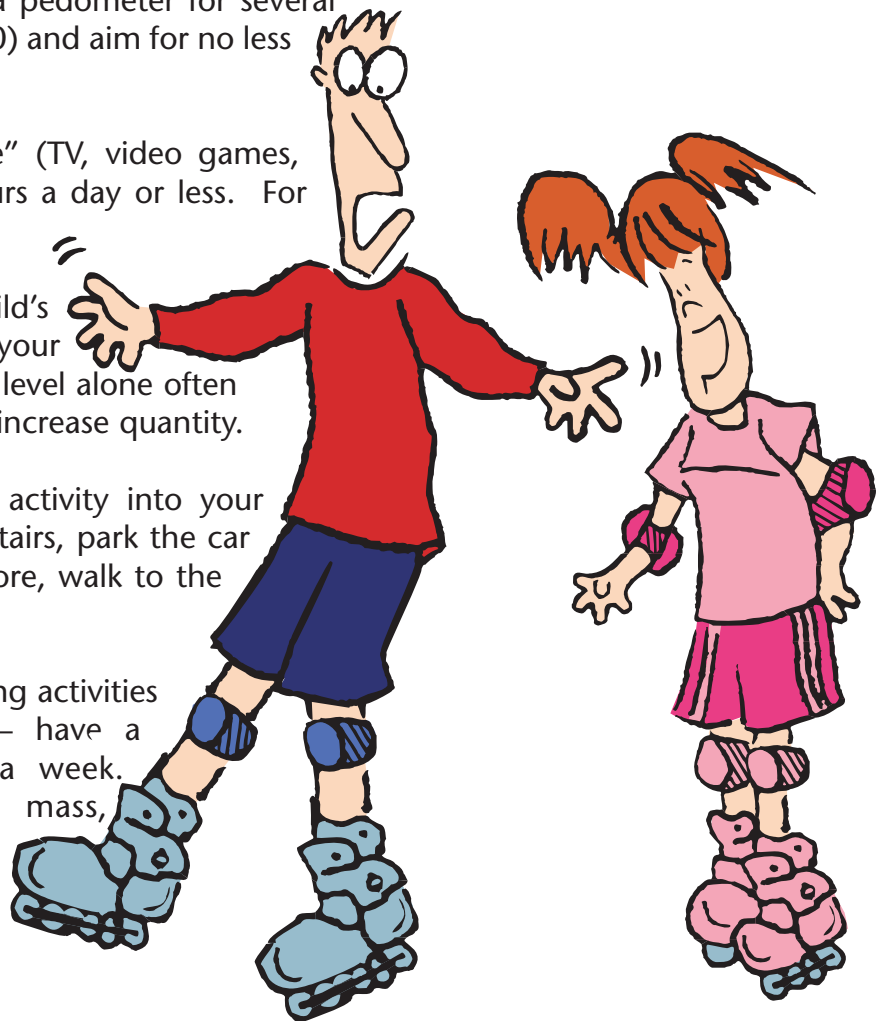


**Arkansas  
Children's  
Hospital**

# Fitness for Children & Adolescents

Don't try to make all changes at once, pick one or two to try first. Then, when you and your child have mastered those, choose one or two more. Parents should make all the changes that you ask your children to make, regardless of your own weight status. Your children look to you for how to be as adults and will copy your behaviors.

- Make time for physical activities on the daily schedule for the family. Include family outings of activity as well.
- Make a list of fun activities that can be considered exercise (cardio, strength training, or flexibility). Post it where you can all see it. Use it for planning your activities for each day (30-60 minutes per day, more on the weekends).
- Try to have activity planned in your schedule every day. While it is important to start slow and build progressively, making activity a part of your every day life is a good goal.
- Have your child wear a pedometer for several days (cost = about \$15.00) and aim for no less than 10,000 steps/day.
- Decrease "Screen time" (TV, video games, computer, etc.) to 2 hours a day or less. For you and your child.
- Write down all your child's physical activities and your own! Monitoring activity level alone often can improve quality and increase quantity.
- Try to sneak in extra activity into your normal day — take the stairs, park the car farther away from the store, walk to the park, etc.
- Increase strength training activities in your child's week — have a goal of two sessions a week. By increasing muscle mass, you can increase their metabolism.



- Increase cardio activities in your child's week — increase quantity or exertion level and have a goal of five sessions a week. Alternate going fast and slow during these activities can burn more calories and improve stamina.
- Be sure to allow time to warm up (doing activities slowly in order to warm up) and cool down (with flexibility, stretching components), this will prevent injury and by doing so prevent having to stop exercising to heal.
- Have one session a week where you and your child target stretching/flexibility more intensively (e.g. stretching, yoga, pilates).
- Encourage your child to participate in one sport each season.
- Vary your exercise — this will keep all family members interested and help you use a variety of muscle groups. Have one family member choose the family activity for the day, so all have at least a day or two a week that they get their favorite activity.

*Seek the advice and approval of your medical provider before starting any exercise program as the plan for your activity may need to be changed to meet your individual needs.*

*For more information regarding these handouts contact:*

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*For treatment in a multidisciplinary medical clinic for overweight youth:*

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