

Notes from the Locker Room

It comes as little surprise that activity levels in both children and adults dropped dramatically in both of our national lockdowns but even more so in the most recent one. Dark evenings and cold weather gave the perfect reasons to stay home and snuggle up on the sofa. However, what are the repercussions of this increase in sedentary lifestyles and how do you get a non-mover...well... moving? This may seem particularly challenging if, as an adult, PE was your least favourite subject and sport is not your favourite past time.

Below, are a few ideas I have used both in lockdown and at other times to encourage young children to get active.

- 1 Set small and realistic targets which can be achieved over a short period of time.
- 2 Make a reward or sticker chart.
- 3 Share success with friends or family.
- 4 Set a good example to your child, show them that you find it hard too but are going to give it a go.
- 5 Try a variety of different activities until you find something your child really enjoys. This could be anything from skateboarding to line dancing!
- 6 Introduce your child to a completely new skill such as juggling or plate spinning.
- 7 Use active apps such as 'Couch to 5km'

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Physical activity plays a vital role in a child's development and well-being. Self-confidence, communication, empathy, teamwork, fulfilment and a sense of achievement are just a few of the benefits children can gain from taking part. There are also mutual benefits for you as it may be that you also become more active as a result. A family that play together thrive together.

Winning, losing, teamwork and communication are all skills that are needed far beyond the classroom, but they are not skills that can be taught from a book or learnt sitting behind a desk or screen. Our aim here at St Catherine's is for physical activity to become a part of daily life essential for building skills which provide children with the best possible chances of succeeding, not only in sport but in any challenge which they face.

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