

101 Tips for Family Fitness Fun



Getting in your 60 minutes of physical activity every day is so much easier when you are doing it with your family and friends. Need some new ideas? Check out SHAPE America's 101 Tips for Family Fitness Fun!

Getting started...

- 1 Schedule regular times throughout the week for your family to be physically active.
- 2 Help everyone find something active that they enjoy and feel successful doing.
- 3 Use a pedometer to determine which activities require the most steps.
- 4 Write down personal goals and track everyone's progress.
- 5 Wear loose fitting clothing and proper shoes to permit freedom of movement.
- 6 Be sure to warm up. Stay flexible by stretching and cool down following your workout.

Remember: It does not have to cost a lot of money to activate the family!

▶ Getting started

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Tips for the home...

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- 7 Practice safe balances and stunts during TV commercials.
- 8 Have a tasting party to introduce your family to new fruits and vegetables.
- 9 Select physical activity-oriented gifts with the recipient's skills, interests and/or needs in mind.
- 10 See how many steps you can get on your pedometer while cleaning, baby sitting, cooking dinner or watching television.
- 11 Use physical activity as a reward (e.g., family goes inline skating).
- 12 Create a scavenger hunt on a rainy day and have a race to see who can find everything.
- 13 Emphasize the importance of having fun and learning; avoid a push "to win."
- 14 Get off the couch and change the channel manually—or better yet, turn it off!
- 15 Plan a "Post Thanksgiving Dinner Walk" for the whole family.

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Tips for the kitchen...

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- 16 Pack your own nutritious snacks, drinks and meals for family outings.
- 17 Keep fresh fruit and vegetables washed, cut-up, chilled and readily available for snacking.

The Great Outdoors...

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- 38 Discover what free and low-cost physical activity areas are near your home (e.g., park, bike trail, hiking trail, tennis court, swimming pool, etc.).
- 39 Volunteer to help a neighbor mow their lawn, rake leaves, or clean up their yard.
- 40 Shovel snow; build a snow sculpture; make snow angels; build a snow house.
- 41 Dig and plant in the garden. Have family members plant their own vegetables, fruits and flowers.
- 42 Chop and stack wood.
- 43 Take a long walk or jog on the beach, in the park, or around your neighborhood.
- 44 Cross country ski around town and into the woods.
- 45 Use a compass to map out a course – then set out on a walk, jog, or bike, hike.
- 46 Canoe or kayak for an entire afternoon.
- 47 Ice skate for a great winter workout.
- 48 Skiing always gives the family a lift.
- 49 Enjoy water exercise activities.
- 50 Play a game of mixed-age backyard or water volleyball.

- 18 Have cold containers of water, juice, or sport drinks available during and after workouts.
- 19 Take the family grocery shopping so everyone can learn to read the nutrition labels (e.g., find the cereal that offers the most fiber per serving; find the tastiest nonfat cheese).

Tips for school...

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- 20 Talk to the physical education teacher about your child's physical education program and how you can provide support.
- 21 Encourage your principal and school board to make quality physical education a priority.
- 22 Volunteer to help with physical activity events such as field days.
- 23 Organize a walking school bus for International Walk to School Week in October.
- 24 Insist that recess is available daily for elementary school students.
- 25 Encourage your school to offer intramurals and a wide variety of high school sports.

Tips for work...

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- 26 Pack a lunch that includes whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Tips for anywhere...

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- 31 Always use the stairs.
- 32 Carry items (book bags, groceries, etc.) in a manner that maintains proper alignment and helps build strength.
- 33 Encourage everyone to "act out" a story as you read it.
- 34 Have everyone choose a city they want to visit. Add everyone's pedometer steps together at the end of the day and convert the steps to miles. See how long it takes to get to each city.
- 35 Play upbeat music while you twist and shake through your chores.
- 36 Get off the bus a few stops early and walk.
- 37 Park a distance from the grocery store so you can walk and get more steps on your pedometer.

- 51 Have the whole family jump rope while practicing spelling.
- 52 Take a nature hike at an outdoor education center.
- 53 Go up, up and away with a kite-flying day.
- 54 Go to a driving range and hit a bucket of balls.
- 55 Go camping where you can pitch a tent, gather firewood, fish, bike, and walk.
- 56 Visit farms throughout the year where you can pick your own strawberries, peaches, and apples.
- 57 Plan cycling trips on safe trails by finding on-line references for biking trails.

YES in your backyard...

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- 58 Walk, jog, and run on a family treasure hunt.
- 59 Toss around as many different-shaped balls/objects as you can find.
- 60 Learn to juggle with the entire family.
- 61 Play "Hit and Go" croquet – hit the ball and run to it – across the whole yard.
- 62 Count how many hula-hoop rotations everyone can do.
- 63 Jump rope – practice rhythms, rhymes and tricks.

- 64 Play a "hot potato" game with a Frisbee and the family dog.
- 65 Plan an action-packed game of badminton... serve from where the birdie drops.
- 66 Jump on a Pogo stick and count bounces.
- 67 Build stilts and walk on them to create laughter and exercise. Remember safety with non-slip pads.
- 68 Ride on a skateboard. Don't forget the helmet and the knee, wrist, and elbow pads.
- 69 Play hopscotch or four square and organize a family tournament.
- 70 Invite the neighbors to play and share favorite tag games.
- 71 Host a sports party where you play traditional games like basketball, softball, volleyball, tetherball, etc.
- 72 Practice inline skating (with knee, wrist and elbow pads and helmets) going further and getting faster each day.
- 73 Take the family pet for a walk or jog.
- 74 Volunteer to wash several elderly neighbors' cars.

Tips for the neighborhood, community and beyond... ▲top

- 75 Create your own Olympic events or friendly challenges at a family reunion or neighborhood block party.

- 96 Share dances from each generation in your family.
- 97 Throw an ethnic/ multicultural dance party.

Take advantage of what you've got around the house... ▲top

- 98 Use a bench or steps for a step-aerobic workout.
- 99 Use pillows, quilts, and air mattresses to create safe and soft play areas to run, jump and tumble.
- 100 Create a wonderful backyard obstacle course using an old tire, hula hoop, ropes for paths, boards for balance, crates for steps and swings to swing!
- 101 Celebrate your new physically active family!

- 76 Organize a family swim outing – be sure to swim with a buddy in supervised areas.
- 77 Enjoy a weekend afternoon of physical activities at a local community center.
- 78 Plan a "walkie talkie" (walk and talk) with a friend the same time every day.
- 79 Walk or bike to a nearby playground – challenge family members to try their skills swinging and crossing a horizontal ladder (monkey bars).
- 80 Take a historical (or architectural) walk or cycling tour.
- 81 Plan a "Block Fitness Festival."
- 82 Adopt a highway, park, or beach, and keep it clean.
- 83 Participate in a "volksmarch." This German "people's walk" is social in nature and is usually 10 kilometers (6.2 miles).
- 84 Take part in a mall walk – especially in bad weather.
- 85 Research and build a new community exercise opportunity.
- 86 Enter a "Fun Run" or a walk-a-thon for a good cause.
- 87 Create or build a fitness trail or par course for the community.

Take advantage of facilities in your neighborhood... ▲top

- 88 Check out the facilities at the local Y, health club, and recreation center.
- 89 Organize a party at an indoor ice or roller skating rink.
- 90 Walk or bike to the tennis court and play.
- 91 Participate in a mixed-age martial arts class.

On rainy days or when stormy weather keeps you indoors Don't be Stuck – Liven Up!... Music Makes It Easy! ▲top

- 92 Create a family video of exercise routines.
- 93 Try a musical version of Simon Says.
- 94 Invite friends and neighbors over for some line dancing.
- 95 See who's most flexible in a game of Twister.