

Get fit with your kids in 2012

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Losing weight and exercising more consistently top Americans' New Year's resolution lists. Health and Exercise Science chair Michael Berry says that adults who include their kids in fitness goals could make working out and losing weight a lot more fun.

Berry said fitness with the kids must include more than a predictable schedule. Parents must engage kids and even make exercise a little unusual to get them excited about working out.

"If you say, we're going to take the kids out for a walk this evening, most kids are going to say, 'Wait, we have to leave the video games or television?'" Berry said. "Kids like to play games, they like to be engaged, so exercise needs to be something that is sports-oriented or game-oriented."

Children need at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity, including muscle-strengthening exercises, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With that goal in mind, Berry makes these suggestions for getting fit with the kids:

See the lights. Around the holidays, there are plenty of interesting light displays to see in your neighborhood. Or walk to pay a visit to nearby friends.

Aim for two or three activities a week, which will help you reach your daily adult fitness goal of 30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week.

Walk to school. That burst of activity in the morning can change your day.

Replace pizza and a movie night with family fitness night at least once a month. Get the kids excited about it.

Check out the fitness attractions your city offers. Visit a rock-climbing gym or a trampoline place, for example.

Make a fitness wish list with the kids. Write down every physical activity they'd like to do, and let them choose at least twice a month.

Play like a kid. A half-hour of tag or kickball is good exercise for you and your children.

Use your gaming system to your advantage. Pick a high-energy physical activity that you like (Just Dance for Wii, for instance), and make it a family competition. When the kids get bored, change the game.

Take it outside. But a simple walk won't cut it, Berry said. Go to a park or nature preserve and take a hike.

Make dining out or after-dinner treats a physical activity. Walk to the restaurant from your home, if possible.

Join a league – kickball, basketball, soccer. They all offer opportunities for you and your kids to have fun getting fit.

Check out guidelines and suggestions at the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/data/index.html).

No matter how you decide to get fit with your kids, make sure you keep it safe, Berry said. Drink plenty of water while exercising, follow the rules of the fitness attractions you visit, and keep [children's](#) strength training to low or moderate resistance (like monkey bars). High resistance strength training can lead to injuries.

Provided by Wake Forest University

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