

How to prevent future couch potatoes

July 11 2017, by Regina Boyle Wheeler, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Children need between 35 and 60 minutes of exercise every day to stay lean and healthy, according to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

But moving them off the couch can be as hard as getting them to eat their vegetables.

Part of the problem is that kids spend too much time with the TV, computers, cell phones, and video game consoles. On average, American kids are in front of screens for a whopping seven-and-a-half hours a day.

So how do you get your kids to put down the game controllers and get moving? First, bite the bullet and set limits—no more than an hour or two of screen time a day, especially on [school](#) nights. Don't put a TV or anything else with a screen in their bedrooms.

Schedule play into their day. After school, encourage them to shoot hoops or jump rope before doing homework. Have an older child play ball with the dog as a daily job. Get active together. Play catch on a sunny day. After dinner go for a quick walk as a family.

Expose your kids to a lot of different kinds of activities through sports teams or clubs. If they find something they love, they're more likely to stick with it as they move from elementary to middle to high school.

Speaking of school, studies show that physically fit kids perform better in the classroom. That means [regular exercise](#) can benefit your kids' [report card](#) as well as their waistlines.

More information: KidsHealth from Nemours has a library of information on [kids and exercise](#) to help you get children of all ages up and moving.

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