

# Try small 'Bites' to get kids to exercise

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(HealthDay)—Kids take their cues from mom and dad, so it only makes sense to participate with them when teaching them the merits of exercise.

Couch potato kids are a real concern. The College of New Jersey [exercise](#) science professor Avery Faigenbaum defined the term exercise-deficit disorder—or EDD—to draw attention to our [children](#)'s shortfall when it comes to meeting moderate-to-vigorous physical [activity](#) recommendations of at least 60 minutes a day.

And experts warn that the unhealthy effects of EDD will extend into adulthood, causing problems like [high blood pressure](#), obesity and diabetes, and that it's time to think of exercise as illness prevention.

The secret to getting kids motivated is the same as it is for adults: Make exercise fun.

One way to do that is by engaging kids in activity bites, small chunks of play that add up to better health without seeming like a chore. Here are some ideas to get your family started.

In your backyard or a nearby park, set up relay races or an obstacle course and invite neighborhood families to join.

For an activity that can be done anywhere, blow up some balloons and make a game of keeping them all up in the air. You can also do this with exercise balls or even beach balls, no matter what the season.

Take a page from your own childhood playbook and share the fun of hula hoops and tossing a Frisbee. Even an activity like drawing with sidewalk chalk gets kids out of the house and away from their electronic devices.

Turn *scheduling* exercise into a fun project by having your kids create an activity calendar and check off each "bite" as it's completed. Post the calendar on the fridge along with snapshots of their best chalk artwork, for instance, for motivation.

**More information:** The American Council on Exercise has details for creating [an activity calendar](#) to get and keep kids motivated to exercise.

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