

# Physical activity helps children grow strong bones, maintain a healthy weight and discover the world around them. Best of all, it's great fun.

All children should be physically active for at least one hour a day. You can help by encouraging your child to find activities they enjoy, and by building physical activity into family life. Most children love running around a park or playing in a playground.

One reason why physical activity in childhood is so important is because it helps your child to maintain a healthy weight.

But that's not the only reason. Physical activity is a part of the way children discover the world and themselves. It helps to build strong muscles and healthy bones, as well as to improve self-confidence.

Bristol University's professor of exercise and health sciences, Ken Fox, has 10 suggestions that can make exercise fun for all the family.

## Ten activity tips

### Recommended physical activity levels

- Children aged under 5 years should do 180 minutes every day
- Young people (5-18 years) should do 60 minutes every day
- Adults (19-64 years) should do 150 minutes every week
- Older adults (65+ years) should do 150 minutes every week

- 1.** Walk or cycle to and from school with the kids as often as possible.
- 2.** Build a den or treehouse with them in the school holidays. Or, under supervision, encourage them to climb a tree or two.
- 3.** Go roller skating, roller blading or skateboarding, indoor or out. In winter, go ice skating. Kids also love scooters.
- 4.** Do an activity challenge together, such as working towards a fun run or a walk for charity.
- 5.** Take the dog for a walk. If you don't have one of your own, ask to borrow a neighbour's or friend's dog and take it for a walk.

**6.** Support your kids in sports, clubs or any other activities that may interest them. Joining a weekend club sport ensures commitment to a team and regular exercise.

**7.** Find time every weekend to do something active with your children. Play frisbee or football in the park, go trampolining or try indoor rock climbing.

**8.** Fly a kite. The Kite Society of Great Britain's website lists a number of groups that regularly meet for special flying days with experienced members who offer advice and assistance. Some also run kite-making workshops.

**9.** Try a beach holiday. When they hit the sand, children find a multitude of ways to exercise, including games, swimming and plenty of running around. Or try an activity-based holiday.

**10.** The National Parks website has lists of events such as guided walks and children's fun days, for fresh ideas for active days out.

