

# Family Activity Guide



## Physical Activity and Your Family

- Do you know why physical activity is good for you?
- Do you want to learn how to be active as a family?
- Do you want to learn about activities that are fun, low cost and easy to fit into your family's busy schedule?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then this booklet may be useful to you. You can make physical activity a part of your family's everyday life.

**Look for ways to be active as a family. Choose activities that suit your children's ages, abilities and confidence level.**



# Benefits of Physical Activity

**Physical activity can improve your health and fitness and:**

- help you to feel good
- give you more energy
- improve concentration and memory
- relieve stress
- help you sleep better
- reduce the risk of many chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers

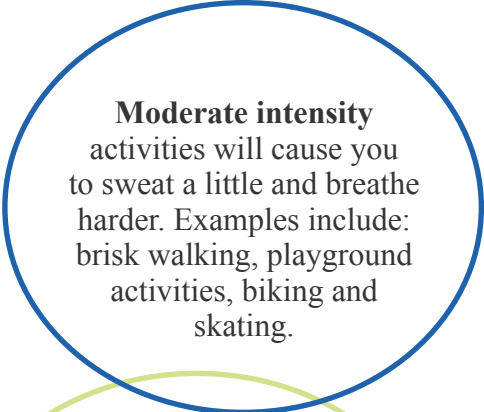
**Physical activity can help children and youth:**

- feel good about themselves
- have fun playing with friends
- do better in school by improving memory and focus
- learn new things
- keep a healthy body weight

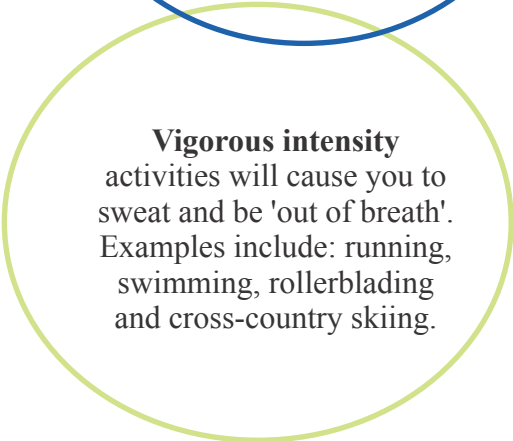


# Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines

- Infants less than one year of age need to be physically active several times daily - particularly through interactive floor based play.
- Toddlers ages 1-2 and preschoolers ages 3-4 need to be physically active for at least 180 minutes at any intensity spread throughout the day.
- Children ages 5-11 and youth ages 12-17 need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Adults and older adults ages 18-65+ need at least 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity, at least 10 minutes at a time.



**Moderate intensity** activities will cause you to sweat a little and breathe harder. Examples include: brisk walking, playground activities, biking and skating.



**Vigorous intensity** activities will cause you to sweat and be 'out of breath'. Examples include: running, swimming, rollerblading and cross-country skiing.

## How to Include Physical Activity in Your Day

- Ask your family to help pick activities they would like to try.
- Plan a family activity in place of TV time (e.g. walking, going to the park, swimming).
- Spend less time sitting. If you do sit, get up every 30 minutes to move and stretch.
- Plan family time to include breaks for activity:
  - Jog on the spot during commercial breaks
  - Stand to fold laundry while watching TV
- Involve children in household activities and meal preparation.
- Walk for 10 minutes at a time or longer before or after dinner, to the store, to work, or with your children to and from school.
- Take the stairs.
- Make free time active time.



**Start by doing what you can and look for ways to do more.**

## Plan it, Track it, Enjoy it!

1. **Set a physical activity goal:** Start by doing what you can. Choose activities that fit easily into your life and that you enjoy.

A family goal might be:

- Go for a family walk every evening after dinner
- Do special activities together on weekends (e.g. swimming, bowling, hiking on a trail)

2. **Write down your plan:** Decide when, where, what you will do, and for how long. Use the Physical Activity Planner below and post it where everyone can see it.

3. **Keep track of your family's activities.** Tracking helps you keep at it!

When you reach your goal, celebrate your success! Then come up with a new goal, for example, walk further with your family, more often or pick up the pace.



### Activity Ideas:

**At home** - try yoga, weightlifting or Zumba. They can be done with an instructional DVD or instruction that you can find for free online.

**Local trails or parks** - make use of your local trails and parks to go walking, running, rollerblading or snowshoeing or for a game of Frisbee!

**Recreation centres** - check with your local recreation centres for low cost or no cost activities.

# Physical Activity Planner

<b>Example</b>		<b>Our Goal:</b> <i>Be active together as a family 3 times a week</i>			
Date	When	Where	What	How long	We did it!
<i>Monday</i>	<i>Before dinner</i>	<i>Park</i>	<i>Family walk</i>	<i>20 minutes</i>	<i>✓</i>

<b>Week 1</b>		<b>Our Goal:</b>			
Date	When	Where	What	How long	We did it!



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**HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

**Durham Health Connection Line**  
**1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6241**  
**[durham.ca/physicalactivity](http://durham.ca/physicalactivity)**

Information available in accessible formats.

