

## Ways to Be Active

- **Make walks more fun with a scavenger hunt.**

Before taking the dog for a walk or enjoying a stroll after dinner, get your children to make a list of things to find along the way. Include on your list things like: a cat, a fruit tree, a red car, a water feature, a swing etc., and get the kids to mark off things as they go.

- **Acquire a pedometer.**

Getting the recommended 10,000 steps per day is easy with a pedometer, as it encourages you to be conscious of your activity and to be on your feet each day. If you cannot afford one for every person in the house, try giving it to a different family member each day and making note of who walked the most steps. It is amazing how much competition can spur on a less-active child. Why not try completing a goal of 80,000 steps in a week that each family member contributes to?

- **Embrace the beat.**

Children, especially teenagers, love to listen to music. When you play something with an upbeat tempo, it can motivate even the most lazy to get moving. Try setting aside *'Tidy Dance'* times, when everyone in the house helps to tidy while rocking out to some great tunes.

- **Play 'Follow the Leader'.**

*Follow the Leader* is a game that many young children love to play, and it not only keeps children active, it can help build important motor skills. Take it in turns to follow each other around the house and yard, being sure to include things like jumps, stretches, lunges and skipping.

- **Take a frisbee on your picnic.**

If you are heading to the park for a picnic, pack items that will encourage play once you are there. A frisbee can be great fun, as can a bat and ball, or soccer ball.

- **Meet friends at the park rather than a café.**

If meeting friends for a coffee, purchase a takeaway and then hit the local park. You can still have a chat, and the kids are free to play on the equipment, run around and explore.

- **Go bowling.**

Tenpin bowling is fun for the whole family and a great way to stay active. Check with your local alley about family deals. You could even join a league!

- **Learn something new together.**

When choosing an activity for your kids to learn, why not choose something that is new to you too. Learn to hula-hoop, play hacky sack, juggle, or practice your handstands.

- **Go for a bushwalk.**

Bushwalking can be a great experience, and it gets children outdoors and enjoying and appreciating their natural environment. Keep it interesting by finding out what birds to look for and ticking them off a list when you see them, or by collecting interesting leaves or stones.

- **Go to an indoor playground.**

If it is too cold to hit the park, look for an indoor playground that offers lots of opportunity to get active. Some indoor centres not only offer slides and jumping castles, but rock climbing walls and trampolines too.

## Ways to Be Active (continued)

- **Organise a 'walking school bus'.**

If you live within walking distance of your child's school, arrange with neighbouring parents to take turns leading a 'walking school bus'. The kids will be active right from the start of the day – you will be helping the environment and alleviating traffic congestion too!

- **Increase your 'incidental exercise'.**

Park further away from your destination and walk the remaining distance to get your steps up. You could even encourage your children to hop, jump or skip all the way from the car, or even race them to the place you are going!

- **Play 'Simon Says'**

Simon Says is a great game for young kids and a fun way to introduce exercise. Try things like, "Simon says...run on the spot" or "Simon says...do ten star jumps".

- **Build a fort.**

Building a fort is a great way to exercise the body as well as the mind, and the excitement once it is built will lead to hours of imaginative play.

- **Get actively involved in sport.**

Instead of just dropping the children off to their organised sport, get involved as a coach or manager, help to wash the uniforms, or cut up oranges. Your involvement will encourage your children to participate, and you will be sharing a fun activity and bonding at the same time.

- **Have a scavenger hunt.**

Scavenger hunts can keep children entertained for hours, both mentally and physically. Try making them a part of birthday celebrations by hiding gifts in a variety of places.

- **Play challenges during commercials.**

During commercial breaks, compete to see who can perform the most push-ups, sit-ups or star jumps, or see who can hold a plank position for the longest. This way your kids will still have their TV time, but they will be active at the same time.

- **Get a ping-pong table.**

Ping-pong is a great rainy day activity and gets the whole family involved. It also builds important hand and motor skills, not to mention being a lot of fun!

- **Make it a rule.**

Make it a rule that for every 30 minutes of TV watched, 10 minutes of exercise must be performed. This can be general play or added to a family walk, and it is a rule that everyone in the house must follow, including you!

- **Help around the house.**

Get the kids involved in mowing the lawn or keeping the garden tidy. You could even start a veggie patch with them!