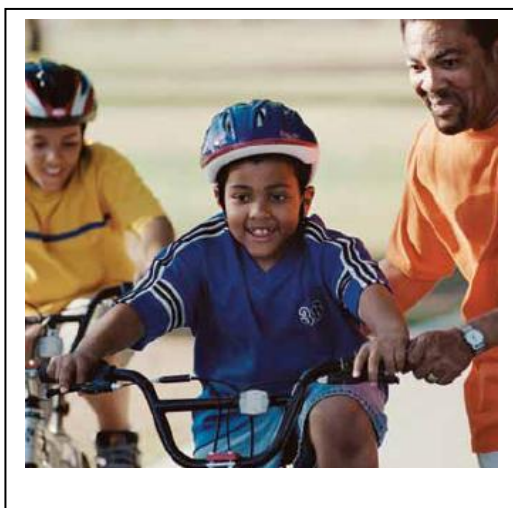


Forget the Gym Fees: Find Free Fun for the Whole Family

Summer is the best time to find free fun for the entire family. Getting your children and teens to be physically active for 60 minutes each day during these months does not require a gym membership. Such memberships can be costly, especially if you sign up your entire family.

When finances are tight there are many ways to get your children and family more physically active without spending a lot of money. In fact, all kinds of great family activity resources are available in your own house and neighborhood... And the best part is: most of them cost nothing!

- Let kids play their favorite music in the common areas of the house and encourage them to dance for as long as they want! Don't be afraid to join in on the fun, yourself... A few minutes of the twist will send your heart rate soaring!
- Make a plan to take the kids to the playground, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, or park at least a couple of times a week. Walk there if you can, and encourage your kids to invite their friends. Freeze-tag and hide-and-go-seek are more fun when others join in!
- If you have a TV, explore the many exercise programs or videos that may be available to you for free! Your public library may also offer exercise videos. If the thought of cardio workouts in the living room turns you off, set up yoga mats—or towels—in a cleared space and have a family yoga night. Encouraging youth to try new exercises keeps physical activity interesting for the whole family! After all, you just might be surprised at how quickly they are able to perfect a downward dog!



These—and many more science-based tips, tools and other resources to help keep the whole family moving—can be found on the **We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)**® Web site (<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>). **We Can!**, a program developed by the National Institutes of Health, does more than just provide tips on how to increase physical activity. It also offers resources that help parents and caregivers keep their 8- to 13-year-olds at a healthy weight by eating right and spending less time glued to the screen (computer, TV, etc.).

Not only that, some 1,300 communities across the U.S. have signed up to run the **We Can!** program. Organizations offering the kinds of activities you're looking for include many local park and recreation departments (and other physical activity-oriented groups). When you visit the **We Can!** Web site to find additional physical activity tips for the whole family, be sure to see whether there's a community site near you and what they have to offer. Also as part of the Let's Move Outside initiative, the U.S. Departments of the Interior (DOI), a **We Can!** partner,

and Agriculture (USDA), are leading a coordinated Federal effort to get kids moving outside. Together, these agencies oversee more than one-fifth of the nation's landmass, including nearly 200 million acres of National Forest, 84 million acres of National Parks, and over 60,000 miles of National Trails.

So, forget the gym fees. Put that extra cash to good use elsewhere, maybe even buying extra fruits and veggies at the grocery store, and get your whole family moving with some fun and free physical activities.

Ready, set, go!