

6 Fun Ways to Get Healthy as a Family

Description

Today's post is from a guest who shares the same passion with anyone who wants to get healthy and stay healthy for life. I'm one of those people, and I'm happy to have Jennifer McGregor share her well-written post on getting healthy as a family.

Whether a family or just one person, Jennifer offers solid advice for all. Enjoy the read and hopefully we'll see another article from her on here again. Thank you, Jennifer, for sharing!

If you've tried to start practicing healthier habits in the past, you may have realized that it's hard to eat clean when your kids refuse to consume anything other than pizza and chicken nuggets (or ice cream and chocolate, of course), and it's challenging to get regular exercise when you're barely home for five minutes in between rushing to meetings, practices, and play dates. Good news: Getting healthy is much easier when done as a family. Here's how to get healthy as a family and have fun while you're doing it.

Create a Family Scoreboard or Goals Chart

Kids love games, but gamifying your health journey can be just as fun for adults. With a bright, colorful [family scoreboard](#) and a points system for rewarding various activities (such as choosing a healthy snack over chips or cookies) and reaching goals, your family's new healthy lifestyle can become a fun competition. If your children have specific health goals, such as brushing their teeth three times each day or reducing TV time, these [goal-oriented printables](#) can make any healthy change fun.



Plan Fun Fitness Games to Keep Your Family Active

Getting more physically active doesn't have to mean regimented, choreographed exercise routines. Swimming is a great option for all children, but it is especially great if your child has [ADHD](#). Regardless of the season, there are great options for diving in. Plan a surprise trip to the indoor pool at your local recreation center in the fall or winter, or book a night at a local hotel to take advantage of the indoor pool for the evening. Plan an outing to a local river or lake for some swimming fun in the summer. Exercise isn't always a miserable sweat session.

The idea of a daily family trip to the gym might not be appealing, but how about a game of balloon volleyball in the living room? You can also use fun fitness games to get your kids "and your spouse" off the couch. Plan these activities ahead and your whole family will have something to look forward to.

Get Everyone Involved in Meal Planning

One reason kids tend to resist healthy diet changes is because they feel as though the choice is being forced upon them. [Take your kids to the store](#) or the farmer's market and let them choose some of their own fruits and vegetables. Then, let them participate in preparing meals. Make it a contest to see who can come up with the best (or worst) recipe. They might think of some scary combinations, but they're more likely to try new things when they have a sense of ownership. Plus, you'll get to spend quality time in the kitchen "mess or no mess, it's sure to be a fun time.

Adopt a Dog

Did you know that dogs have been proven to reduce stress, heighten mood, and even improve cardiovascular health? A fun-loving canine can be the perfect motivation to get your family on their feet! The best part is, you can exercise her together and it won't even feel like work. A spirited game of fetch, an evening walk around the block, or even a family hike are all great workouts that everyone can look forward to. Plus, your kids are a lot more likely to stay active with a constant play companion at their disposal!

Run a Household Chores Race

A healthy lifestyle isn't just about exercising and eating right. Your environment plays a role in your health and well-being, too. If your living room is cluttered and your kitchen a mess, everyone is likely to be more stressed. Stressed family members lead to arguments, and it becomes a vicious cycle of endless bickering that ultimately helps no one.

Not to mention, a home that's not clean is a home that is more likely to harbor germs, bacteria, and dust that can make your family sick. Do your family a favor and get everyone involved in keeping the house clean and tidy. [Divvy up chores](#) and offer a prize to the family member who finishes the race by getting their chores done first.

Conversation Starters and Feel-Good Jars Boost Emotional Health

It's important to have dinner together as a family, but what makes that time so important is that it provides together-time for discussing your day and supporting each other. When a family member has a tough day at work, dinner time is often when the day's hassles are discussed. Likewise, achievements at school or work are proudly boasted at the dinner table.

Make this special family time even more fun with conversation starters or feel-good jars – jars filled with slips of paper with vague statements that you must build a conversation around or a jar that each family member helps to fill by writing something positive about another family member each day. Use the time to invent silly stories or help a child or spouse cope with an especially difficult day. All of these discussions contribute to your family's emotional health in a positive way.

Getting healthy can be a tough journey all alone. But getting healthy with your whole family can be tons of fun when you embrace the joys of family and togetherness and get everyone in your home on board with your journey to health. By making healthy habits fun and exciting, you'll turn getting healthy into an enjoyable adventure.

Jennifer McGregor has wanted to be a doctor since she was little. Now, as a pre-med student, she's well on her way to achieving that dream. She helped create [PublicHealthLibrary.org](#) with a friend as part of a class project. With it, she hopes to provide access to trustworthy health and medical resources. When Jennifer isn't working on the site, you can usually find her hitting the books in the campus library or spending some downtime with her dog at the local park.

(Photo from Pixabay by [Rudy Anderson](#))

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