

Tips On Incorporating Your Family Into Your Exercise Routine

Description

When you become a parent, suddenly your time “and really, your life, if I’m being honest” is never your own again. I say that almost jokingly, but it’s an entirely serious matter. When you become a parent, especially when your children are babies and literally rely on you to keep them alive and safe every single minute of every single day, it can be really easy for many aspects of your life to fall to the wayside, including matters of your own personal care and health, such as your fitness.

I have come to know many parents in my lifetime, and one of the biggest frustrations they all voice, regardless if they work full-time, part-time, stay at home, work from home, or any combination therein, is that they simply don’t have enough time or hours in the day to workout. We all have only 24 hours in each day, regardless if we have kin to care for in each of those hours, and there’s nothing we can do to get “more” time, as it is. If you want to take care of yourself and fit in fitness to be part of your daily routine, you’ve got to exercise as much commitment, flexibility, patience, and creativity to it as you do your own parenting. Take it from me!

I had been a committed and [regular runner](#) (and specifically, a marathoner) for nearly five years before I had my first child. I wanted to continue to run after I had my first child (and since I’ve had my second), and I’m happy to say that I’ve been able to do so. Like I said before, figuring out how to “fit in fitness” after having children necessitates a ton of flexibility and creativity “not to mention support from your family/partner and patience/grace from yourself” but it’s entirely possible. Below, I’ll outline my tried-and-true tips to help you figure out how you can fit in your fitness routine each day with your family in tow.

Invest in a running stroller so you can run with your children. I didn’t buy my first running stroller until my oldest was a year old, but by the time my second kid came around, I was running with her by the time she was just about 4 months old. If you like to run, and if your child’s weight and height satisfies your running stroller’s safety requirements, I can’t urge you enough to invest in a high-quality running-specific stroller. There are many buying guides out there that will give you some great insight into various stroller brands out there, and while their price tags might be shocking, they are worth their weight in gold. An added bonus: pushing a stroller while running doubles as an excellent strength workout, and the mental toughness you’ll cultivate over the miles of pushing upwards of 100 pounds is indescribable. Chat with your pediatrician before you run with your child, though, to be sure that you have his or her blessing.

Ride alongside your children/pull them along behind you. Many of us can remember learning how to ride our bikes for the first time and have fond memories of riding through our neighborhoods growing up. If you enjoy bike riding, consider getting a bicycle for your child so that he/she, too, can learn to ride and can eventually become proficient enough of a rider to ride alongside you. Conversely, if your child is very young, you could always purchase some type of bicycle trailer to pull your baby behind you on a ride. Having bikes in the family can also be a great resource to you/your partner because one of you can run while the other (plus the children) ride bikes or ride in the stroller, too. It goes without saying,

but by riding bikes or running alongside your children, you™re setting a positive precedent for them – an excellent role-modeling example – that exercise is both fun and a necessary part of a healthy and vibrant lifestyle. If your children grow up constantly seeing you or your partner exercising, chances are that your children will emulate your behaviors in their own lives, too. Everybody wins!

Embrace your inner yogi as a family. While [physical health](#) and well-being is important, so, too, is mental health. As a family, you can easily incorporate a family-centered yoga practice into your everyday routine in the comfort of your own home. There are many DVDs out there that offer family-friendly yoga routines – ones that don™t require an advanced yoga practice or even much in the way of experience – and you may find that the calming effect of yoga helps you to connect with your children and with your family in ways that are harder to come by when you™re out pounding the pavement on a run or logging miles on a ride.

Go for a hike (or even a walk through the mall). Last but certainly not least, one of the easiest and most accessible activities you can do as a family – while still satisfying a personal fitness goal – is to simply go for a walk or a [hike](#). It doesn™t matter if you stroll through a local mall or if you hit up your local park; sometimes, it™s just nice to slow down, take in the scenery, and chat with your family. Again, if your children are very young, you could always push them along in a stroller or even wear them in a baby carrier, if you™d like. Regardless of the type of walking or hiking adventure you take, the experience remains a way for you to connect with your family and incorporate them into your exercise routine – and in the process, model for them that regular physical activity is an important and meaningful part of day-to-day life.

I™ll be the first to admit that being a parent can be really tough and trying at times, and it™s easy to neglect our own personal welfare and health for the sake of our children – or because we feel like we –just don™t have the time. My experiences have taught me that it™s entirely doable to incorporate my family into my regular exercise routine, so long as I am patient, flexible, and creative with my endeavors. Some of my most meaningful training runs and races have been the ones that I™ve run with my kids, and I have no doubt that if you also include your family into your training, that you, too, will find your time with your family while on a run, ride, walk, or meditation also incredibly meaningful.

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