



## “Smart Moves” for Families

Making a commitment to be physically active is one of the best ways families can prevent or combat obesity and its consequences. Physical therapists support the Department of Health and Human Services’ Physical Activity Guidelines, which state:

- Children should get 1 hour or more of physical activity a day.
- Adults should get 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity or 1 hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.

Physical therapists’ extensive knowledge of pre-existing conditions (such as type 2 diabetes and obesity) allows them to help people of all ages and abilities establish lifelong patterns of physical activity. For those who already are obese, physical therapists can devise safe exercise programs that reduce pain, restore flexibility, and increase strength and cardiovascular endurance. For people with type 2 diabetes, physical therapists can design and supervise exercise programs that reduce the need for medications, lower the risk of heart disease and stroke, and help manage glucose levels, among other benefits.

The following tips were designed by physical therapists to help families stay active and incorporate physical activities into their daily lives.

### “Smart Moves” for Families

- Plan weekend family activities involving physical activity, such as hiking, swimming, bicycling, mini-golf, tennis, or bowling.
- Help your child plan physical activities with friends and neighbors, such as skating or softball.
- Have your kids brainstorm a “rainy day” game plan of indoor activities involving fitness games such as Wii Fit or Dance Dance Revolution.
- Remember that your family does not need to join a health club or buy fancy equipment to be active. Walking isn’t costly and it’s easy. So is designing a backyard obstacle course. Weights can be made from soda or detergent bottles filled with sand or water!
- Provide positive rewards for your child when he or she engages in physical activities, such as workout clothes, a new basketball, or an evening of roller-skating.

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- Provide positive feedback about your child's lifestyle changes. Remember not to focus on the scale (for you or your child).
- Be your child's "exercise buddy." Plan daily walks or bike rides and set goals together for increasing physical activity rather than for losing weight. It's also great "bonding" time!
- As you schedule your child's extracurricular activities, remember to plan time for exercise and activity as a priority for the entire family. Don't just "squeeze it in."
- Encourage children to try individualized sports such as tennis and swimming. Studies show such activities are the basis of lifelong fitness habits.
- Parents and children can do exercises while watching television (or at least during commercials), such as sit-ups, push-ups, or running in place. Discourage snacking or eating meals while watching.

Find a physical therapist in your area at [www.moveforwardpt.com](http://www.moveforwardpt.com)

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