

50 fun family activity ideas

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Heart
Foundation

"I'm bored!" will become a distant memory with our fifty fun ideas!

General

- 1 Set aside an hour to be active together: head to the local park and play a game everyone enjoys.
- 2 If your kids show an interest in a particular sport, encourage them. Clubs for sports like rugby, soccer, cricket, tennis and netball are often run locally and tend to be affordable, especially if they are subsidised.
- 3 Swimming is a great family activity: head to the pool or, if you're lucky, the beach. It's also suitable for the whole family and a really important skill for the kids to have.
- 4 Not all activity has to be sporty though; getting the kids out in the garden is a great way to be active. Encourage them to start their own vegetable patch so they learn where food comes from. You could also build a mini sandpit or your own obstacle course.
- 5 Have a no car day. Pick a day of the week when everyone has to get to and from work and school by walking, cycling or public transport.



Walking

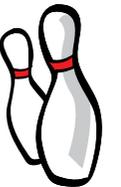
- 6 Take the dog for a walk together, or offer to walk a neighbour's
- 7 Explore a local suburb or reserve on foot. Why not play I-spy as you go?
- 8 Buy a pedometer for everyone and see who can take the most steps! You could even create a chart for the family to track their progress.
- 9 The Heart Foundation runs over 1,100 free walking groups around Australia. Check out our walking pages to start or join a local group: www.heartfoundation.org.au/walking

Sitting less

- 10 Incorporate activity into your daily routine: walking or cycling to school or work everyday will do everyone the world of good. If you can't walk or cycle all of the way, try to do part of the way instead.
- 11 Resolve to watch one less TV program a week. Use the freed up time to take a walk together or get active in any other way.
- 12 Remove the remote control from the living room so everyone has to get up off the couch to change the channel.
- 13 Halve the time it takes to get the household chores done by getting the rest of the family to help. Each person can be given their own job like helping hang out the washing, doing the dusting, and washing the floors. Put on some upbeat music and make spring cleaning fun!
- 14 Take the family shopping. Agree to stick to a list but everyone is allowed to choose one healthy item. Allow the children to check the list as you go round. When you get home, get everyone to help bring in the shopping and put it away.
- 15 Next, enlist the family to help you cook dinner! Assign everyone a job like setting the table or washing the vegies. Plus, the kids are more likely to enjoy eating something they have helped make.
- 16 Get the whole family washing the car. Not only is it a good way to burn off some energy, it's also much cheaper than the car wash!



- 17 Kids shouldn't spend more than two hours a day in front of a television or computer screen so, to make it fair, limit screen time for everyone. Making a family agreement so the kids also have a say will make the idea much more appealing to them. Plus, you can use the spare time to do the activities you don't usually get time for.
- 18 Instead of heading straight home, go by the park after school so kids aren't tempted by the TV. Remember to take some healthy snacks with you for hungry tummies!



At the weekend

- 19 Pack a picnic and go on a nature trail or bushwalk together. Remember to take sunscreen and plenty of water with you!
- 20 Go hiking, rowing or camping on your next holiday: get everyone involved in choosing where to go and what to do.
- 21 Choose a fun day trip that keeps the family on their feet: the zoo, botanical gardens and historical sites are all great ideas.
- 22 Engage in a bit of friendly competition by having a game of ten-pin bowling or mini golf.
- 23 Organise a family bike ride. Make sure you all have helmets, and remember to take a rucksack with water and healthy snacks when you stop to take a break. There are many designated cycle tracks, so why not explore your local route today?
- 24 Try out new activities together and you'll be surprised at how much fun you'll have! Why not give rock climbing, martial arts or dancing a go?



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Outdoor games

- 25** Invite another family with kids round and enjoy having fun in the garden. Cheap toys like hula hoops, balls and skipping ropes will keep them happy for hours. Agree to take it in turns so you are invited round next time.
- 26** Chases or tag is a firm playground favourite so get the kids to teach you the latest version in your backyard!
- 27** Follow the leader is another favourite game. Use movements like skipping, jumping, walking, running, clapping and moving arms in circles. Try to include equipment like hoops, balls and skipping ropes.
- 28** Practice ball skills like kicking or hitting a ball against a wall, or try throwing a ball against a wall and catching it. It's very good practice for kids who play a sport like soccer, tennis or netball. 
- 29** Skipping is a great way to keep fit besides being lots of fun. Why not get the children 'big rope' skipping by using an extra long rope so more people are skipping at the same time.
- 30** Egg and spoon races aren't just for sports day! Place an egg on a dessert spoon and see who can get to the finish line first without dropping their egg!
- 31** Teach the children games you used to play when you were younger such as hopscotch.
- 32** Ask the kids to invent their own ball game. They will love making up the rules, and it's a great way to develop their creativity and communication skills. 
- 33** Join up with another family at the park and form teams to play a game of cricket or soccer.
- 34** Allow the kids to draw on your paving with coloured chalks: the rain will wash the marks away. Get everyone to take a couple of flagstones each and make your own outdoor family exhibition!
- 35** Hot days are great for having fun with water: fill the paddling pool, throw water balloons and blow bubbles!

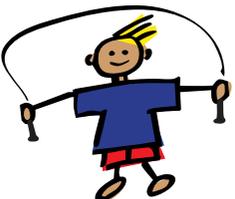


Indoor games

- 36** Video games are popular with kids of all ages, so encourage yours to play the energetic ones now available. Many of the games are family orientated and designed to get you all involved: perfect for when the weather's bad! 
- 37** Put on some upbeat music and get the children to have a dance competition to their favourite songs.
- 38** Allow the kids to put on a performance of their favourite story or nursery rhyme for you. They can spend the afternoon dressing up and rehearsing, and put on the show after dinner. 
- 39** A mini golf course can be set up indoors using paper cut-outs or plastic cups to make the holes, and using the furniture as obstacles. Use ping-pong balls as golf balls, and ping-pong bats as clubs.
- 40** A game of shoot hoops can be done indoors by setting up a basket, bucket or empty bin and making balls from firmly scrunched up newspaper. See who can shoot the most hoops!

Outdoor and indoor games

- 41** Hide and seek is a great game to play indoors, outdoors or both. Remember, no peeking!
- 42** Get crafty! Make a kite together and then get outside to test fly it! 
- 43** A game of Twister will have everyone laughing whether you're indoors or out. Take it in turns to be the spinner.
- 44** Three-legged races are bound to end in giggles! Children need to be in pairs and, standing side by side with their arms around each others' waists, the two middle legs are tied together to make one leg. Ready, set, go!

- 45** A game of under/over ball is lots of fun! A ball is passed backwards over the head to the next person, who passes it between their legs and so on.
- 46** A game of 'Simon says' is not just for parties: a game any time is great fun too! Make sure that you keep the instructions activity themed!
- 47** Set up some activity stations in a circuit and put up cue signs at each. For example, in four corners of the room or yard have 1. Skipping; 2. Hopping; 3. Star-jumps; 4. Twirling a hoop around the waist. Rotate between stations after two minutes. What a great excuse for the kids to be your very own personal trainers! 
- 48** Wheelbarrow racing in pairs is a great laugh. One person gets on their hands and knees on the ground, and another then picks up their legs by the ankles to make the wheelbarrow. Race other pairs to the finish line!
- 49** A scavenger hunt can be played with lots of people in teams, or just by one or two. Give kids a list of items to scavenge from the house and garden. Some examples are: stone, a blade of grass, a feather, a leaf, a twig. You can also add to the game by asking kids some questions to answer about the items they find, just to make it a little more interesting.
- 50** A balloon race between your legs is heaps of fun either indoors or outdoors! 

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UNITED is helping Australian families take small, easy steps towards a healthier lifestyle and a healthy weight. For more smart ideas visit: www.heartfoundation.org.au/mumsunited