

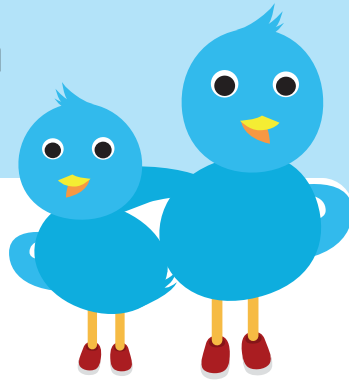
Experience Your America Right Outside Your Door

10 Ways to Keep Your Family Active Every Day



Everyone Can Get Moving!

(Olympic athlete skills not required)



National Parks offer many fun outdoor recreation opportunities to improve your physical and mental health. But not everyone can get to a National Park every day. The good news is your family can find similar activities in your local community! This booklet offers 10 simple ways to make staying active outdoors a part of your family's everyday routine.

Did You Know? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that:

» **ADULTS** get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, 5 days a week

» **KIDS** get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day

Make sure the activity gets you a little heated—aim for:

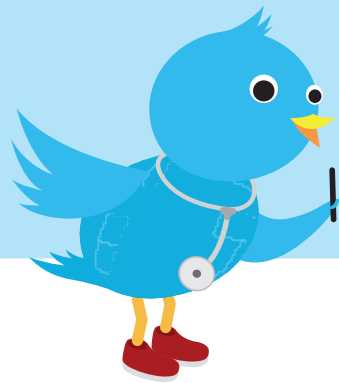
Moderate Intensity Activity: You can talk while doing it, but not sing.

OR

Vigorous Activity: You can only get a few words out before catching your breath.



Good Reasons to Get Outside



We all know that exercise is good for us, but did you know you can get added health benefits from your everyday outdoor activities like walking the dog?

Moving outside is the best way to improve your overall well-being. Spending time outdoors helps reduce stress, improves your immune system, increases your energy, and gives you a more positive outlook. Even if you live in a city, there are opportunities to discover the great outdoors and live healthfully every day!

"Even if you live in a city, there are opportunities to discover the great outdoors and live healthfully every day!"

Reasons to get moving! Thirty minutes of daily exercise has been shown to:

- » Lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colon & breast cancers
- » Lower blood pressure & improve circulation
- » Help maintain a healthy weight
- » Help you sleep better
- » Increase your chances of living a long and active life

You'll notice that you feel better and have more energy as soon as you start exercising. As you get stronger, add more time to your workout, do more vigorous activity, or change your routine to keep improving your health.



1 Build Activity Into Every Day



Just as you would plan ahead for a trip to a National Park, figure out times, activities, and safe places for exercising before embarking on your journey.

- » Ask your neighbors about their favorite local parks, playgrounds, and walking trails
- » Visit the [Online Resources](#) throughout this booklet to learn about outdoor recreation opportunities near you
- » Ask your local YMCA or Boys and Girls Club for listings of open outdoor spaces where your family can safely play

Involve Kids in Planning:

- » Choose a theme for each day's activity such as birds, bugs, plants, trees, etc.
- » Encourage kids' individual interests
- » Visit the National Park Service's Webrangers Webrangers.us and Junior Rangers Program NPS.gov/Learn/JuniorRanger.cfm to find fun, educational activities and learn how kids can become Junior Rangers
- » Try new activities as a family, such as hiking, biking, canoeing, or participating in community walks/runs

KIDS' CORNER

Arctic terns travel with their families from their nesting grounds in the Arctic all the way to Antarctica and back again every year. Can you travel with your family to a park near where you were born?



2 Bike Your Neighborhood



Biking can be a quick way to get from place to place, or a fun activity for the whole family to enjoy together.

Beginner:

Plan a family bike ride at a local park or around your neighborhood, and try biking to local destinations, like your office, your school, or the grocery store.

Moderate:

Grab a friend and bike to a more distant location, tracking your miles each week.
» *League of American Bicyclists* BikeLeague.org offers courses on safe bike commuting.

Experienced:

Plan a bike trip at a National Park.
» *Find your nearest National Park with the NPS Park Finder* NPS.gov/FindAPark.

KIDS' CORNER

The 45-mile carriage roads at Acadia National Park NPS.gov/Acad are among the oldest in the country. How long do you think it would take to bike the whole carriage road? See how many miles you can bike in one summer.

» Check out BicyclingInfo.org for bicycling basics, safety tips, and bike paths and routes in your state.



3 Make Nature Your Soundtrack



Have you ever heard a humming bird hum or a squirrel chatter? Nature is everywhere—not just in parks. Go for a nature walk around your neighborhood with the family and listen for birds, insects, squirrels, and the wind.

Try this scavenger hunt for items you can only find in nature, such as:

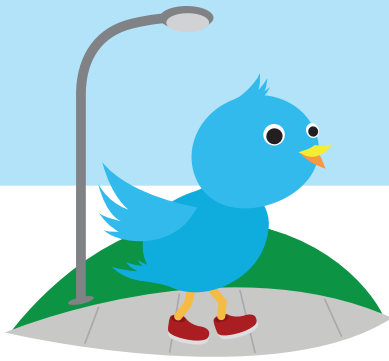
- » Something beautiful _____
 - » Something smooth and something rough _____
 - » Three different types of leaves _____
 - » Something that makes a noise _____
 - » An animal track. Who left it? _____
 - » The oldest thing you can find _____
 - » Something you can feel but cannot see _____
 - » Something with a strong scent _____
 - » A nest or animal's home _____
 - » Something scary _____
 - » A good hiding place _____
- » *Visit Discover the Forest DiscoverTheForest.org/Where-To-Go or Nature Find NWF.org/NatureFind to find nearby parks, forests, and natural spaces in your state.*

KIDS' CORNER

During the animal mating season, it is as loud in the Everglades National Park NPS.gov/Ever at night as it is in the middle of the day. What sounds do you hear when you're outside?



4 Walk Your Neighborhood



Discover a new walking trail in your area. It could be as simple as going the long way to the corner store, or taking turns walking the dog.

Beginner:

Park as far away from store entrances as possible, so you have to walk to and from your car. Carrying groceries gives an added workout for your arm muscles!

Moderate:

Start walking to destinations, such as school or the market. If you're going a long distance, get off the subway or bus one stop earlier and walk to your destination. Build up to taking a hike or long walk on a local trail. » *Visit [American Trails AmericanTrails.org](http://AmericanTrails.org) to find recreational trails, bike and walking paths, hiking trails, greenways, and national and state parks in your state.*

Experienced:

Looking for a challenge? Get a pedometer to track your daily steps. Aim for 8,500 steps per day, then try adding 2,000 steps to your daily routine.

KIDS' CORNER

The Civil Rights movement grew from a 54 mile protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, now the Selma to Montgomery National Historical Trail NPS.gov/Semo. It changed the course of history.

Have you ever walked for a cause?
Try it!

» *Type in your address to WalkScore.com to find local restaurants, shopping, parks, and more that are easy to walk to!*



5 Play Your Heart Out



Did you know that playing is good for you? Head to your nearest playground or green space with the family—bring along a beach ball and see how long you can keep it in the air, toss around a Frisbee, or grab the neighbors and start a good old-fashioned kickball game.

Pack a Picnic Everyday

When you head out to play (or go to school or work), pack a lunch and healthy snacks to take with you. This prevents you from buying foods on the go that may be less healthy – and saves you money!

"When you head out to play, pack a lunch and healthy snacks to take with you."

» Find a playground or safe space to play near you through Kaboom's play space finder: [PlaySpaceFinder.Kaboom.org](https://www.kaboom.org/play-space-finder)

KIDS' CORNER

Dolphins at Biscayne Bay National Seashore [NPS.gov/Bisc](https://www.nps.gov/Bisc) spend many hours each day playing in the water – pushing and balancing objects on their snouts and fins, herding fish, chasing each other, and even blowing bubbles! How long can you play outdoors each day?



6 Dig Into Gardening



Garden activities like planting, weeding, and pushing a wheelbarrow are great ways to get your 30 minutes of activity and spend time outdoors.

Beginner:

If you don't have a garden, you can find a community garden nearby through the American Community Garden Association [CommunityGarden.org](https://www.communitygarden.org). If you don't have an outdoor space, you can grow plants like basil and tomatoes right on your window sill or on a fire escape!

Moderate:

If you have a garden, involve the whole family in tending it. Try expanding your garden to get more vigorous activity through digging, and enjoy more natural beauty and more delicious fruits or vegetables.

Experienced:

Grow Your Dinner! Harvest some veggies and herbs from your own or community garden to make a fresh and delicious meal, or slice them raw for a snack. For tips and recipes on how to cook what you grow, visit the Gardener's Network [GardenersNet.com/Recipes](https://www.gardenersnet.com/recipes).

KIDS' CORNER

In the winter of 1777, Washington's troops stationed at Valley Forge, now Valley Forge National Park [NPS.gov/Vafo](https://www.nps.gov/vafo) survived on less than a couple of pounds of meat and bread each day.

Can you grow or pick a pound of vegetables in your family or community garden?

» *Learn how to start a window garden from the Gardening Channel:* [GardeningChannel.com/Window-Garden](https://www.gardeningchannel.com/window-garden)



7 Visit Your Local Farmers' Market



If you don't have a garden or your produce isn't quite ready to harvest, make a trip to your local farmers' market for fresh produce and some family fun.

Pick Your Fruits!

Find a local berry farm in the summer or an apple orchard in the fall and pick your own snacks. Replace your family's cookie jar with a fruit bowl – if the fruit is visible, everyone's more likely to choose it as a snack.

"If the fruit is visible, everyone is more likely to choose it as a snack."

» Visit the USDA's site apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets for an official list of farmers' markets, or Local Harvest LocalHarvest.org for farmers' market reviews and ratings, and a list of local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunities.

KIDS' CORNER

Bison at Yellowstone National Park NPS.gov/Yell travel 200-400 miles between summer and winter in search of fresh grass to eat. How far would you walk to get fresh food? Try walking or biking to the market with your family.



8 Take A Hike



Trips to national parks are great for hiking, but not everyone can rely on them for their 30 minutes every day. Instead, take advantage of local parks and trails to plan daily, weekly, and monthly hiking adventures using the hiking trip planner below.

Beginner: Plan a hike to your local city park

- » Place _____
- » Time _____
- » How to get there _____
- » What to bring *water bottles, healthy snacks, supportive shoes*

Moderate: Plan a day hike to your state or national park

- » Place _____
- » Time _____
- » How to get there _____
- » What to bring *water bottles, picnic, bag for trash, supportive shoes*

Experienced: Plan an overnight hiking trip

- » Place _____
- » Time _____
- » How to get there _____
- » What to bring *water bottles, healthy meals and snacks, bag for trash, tent, backpacks, flashlights, sleeping bags, toiletries, rope, rain tarp, matches, utility knife*

KIDS' CORNER

Hiking the Appalachian National Scenic Trail [NPS.gov/Appa](https://www.nps.gov/Appa) takes five months and 2,175 miles.

It takes the average person 2,000 steps to walk a mile, meaning it takes 4,350,000 steps to hike the Trail.

Get out your pedometer and see how long it takes your family to walk the same distance!

» *The Great Outdoors Recreation Pages, aka GORP [GORP.com](https://www.gorp.com), has a park finder and hiking, camping, and park guides to plan day and weekend trips.*



9 Clean Up Your Act



Even household chores count as physical activity! Pushing and pulling a vacuum or lawn mower is a similar motion to rowing a boat and is a great way to build upper body strength.

- » Get the whole family involved in cleaning activities – turn on some music and make it fun!
- » Try mopping, sweeping, dusting, and scrubbing – you’ll be surprised to find yourself out of breath and sweaty by the time your house sparkles.
- » *Looking for a different adventure? Check out [RiverSearch.com](https://www.riversearch.com) to find whitewater rafting family adventures, tips for beginners, or new challenges for experts.*

"You'll be surprised to find yourself out of breath & sweaty by the time your house sparkles"

KIDS' CORNER

It took Washington's army 10 hours to get across the Delaware River on Christmas Eve in 1776 during the battle of Trenton. Imagine how much arm muscle that took! See how many days it takes you to do 10 hours of arm exercises, like climbing the monkey bars or pushing a wheelbarrow.



10 Turn The Stairs Into A Mountain



Make a no elevator rule and take the stairs wherever you go—at work, in your apartment building, or at the shopping mall. When you take the escalator, keep walking and don't let the machine do the work for you.

KIDS' CORNER

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made his "I Have a Dream" speech from the 80th step of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. [NPS.gov/Linc](https://www.nps.gov/Linc). Can you climb 80 stairs? Build up to climbing the same amount of stairs as the Statue of Liberty – 546 steps!

Pump Up Your Soundtrack

If you need something a little more high energy, put on your favorite tunes and start dancing or moving to the beat with the family. Music gets you working harder while having more fun!

"Put on your favorite tunes and start dancing or moving to the beat with the family. Music gets you working harder while having more fun!"



This publication was developed by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). The mission of the RTCA is to implement the national resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America. The layout and illustrations were designed by Miguel Gaydosh and content was developed by Alyssa Ursillo.

For more information about the RTCA, our projects by state, and healthy living, visit us on the web at [NPS.gov/RTCA](https://www.nps.gov/RTCA)

