



THE BEST OPTIONS FOR family fitness

It might take some coaxing to get them off the couch, but family fitness activities are a great way to get healthy and spend some quality time together this summer. Exercise and Nutrition Scientist Kathleen Alleaume has an array of fun fitness ideas for the whole family.

Children learn from the example that parents provide, so making fitness a priority will pave the way for a lifetime of healthy, active living. The key is to keep it simple and fun for everyone. The following activities will engage the whole family and get everyone's heart pumping!

Head outside

Take advantage of the outdoors and the convenience it provides.



Nutritionist Kathleen Alleaume is the author of *What's Eating You?* published by Random House.

A simple game of tag or Frisbee in your backyard or at the local park is enough to get everyone's adrenaline flowing. With a little creativity and equipment (even if it's just a ball to kick around), you can find a way to make it work for everyone.

Other ideas include relay games, bocce, croquet or cricket.

Explore the great outdoors

The dynamic nature of the great outdoors can often make your family forget they are even exercising. With loads of fun activities to choose from

- including hiking, biking and horse riding - you will never run out of options. If you're near water, try kayaking, canoeing or rafting to cool off in the summer heat. Not sure where to go? Find a national park near you at www.australiannationalparks.com

Water fitness

Do you and your family typically head to the beach in summer? If so, consider mixing in a few fun activities that go beyond building sandcastles. Play a game of cricket or soccer, fly a kite, post up a volleyball net, or take a long walk across the

shoreline and collect sea shells. At many of Australia's surf beaches, you can also sign up for surfing lessons (lessons are available to children as young as five years old).

If getting to the beach isn't an option, head to your local pool and get active with some friendly races, diving games (such as diving for coins) or a game of water polo.

Race for a cause

Not only will participating in these events help raise money for great causes (many charities receive funding from the entry fees, as well as from additional fundraising), but they usually require some training. This is a great excuse to get your family exercising well in advance to prepare for race day. Visit www.weightloss.com.au/events.html; www.mothersdayclassic.com.au; or www.bicycles.net.au to find events taking place in your state.

Video games

When it's too wet or cold to venture outside, fire up the console. When it comes to fitness video games, the Wii Fit Plus provides endless options - perhaps some yoga for Mum; skiing for the kids; strength training for Dad; and tenpin bowling or one of the new dance party games for everyone. These games also come with a Wii Balance Board to read your movements and track your progress. The balance board also serves as a scale, measuring your weight, and it tracks your BMI. Games start from just \$29.95. **hfg**

GETTING STARTED

- Start a family tradition such as taking a walk or bike ride together after school or dinner, or plan at least one family activity every weekend. It can be as simple as a picnic in the park or a night at the bowling alley.
- Take turns selecting an activity for the family to do as a group each week.
- Stock up on some basic gear, such as a Frisbee, jump ropes, kites, a footy, a cricket set or other sports gear so you always have options available.
- Help everyone in the family find an activity that makes them feel successful.
- The more, the merrier! Join forces with another family in the neighbourhood or have your kids invite their friends.



The national recommendation for children and young people is to participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day. Additionally, children and young people should not spend more than two hours per day using electronic media for entertainment (eg. computer games, internet and TV/movies).

