

Healthy and Safe Exercises for Children

It's important that children get a lot of exercise. While it is easy to keep them occupied with television, DVDs, video games, and a playroom full of toys, it is not always so easy to get them moving. Varying the types of exercises you want the children to do and treating exercise as play time will help get them up in motion. Make sure that the exercises you choose are age appropriate and that safety is always a priority when exercising.

Here are some healthy and safe exercises for children that any adult can join in on:

Bicycle riding - Whether on a tricycle or a mountain bike, children love to hop on their bikes and take off. Bicycle riding is good cardiovascular exercise and also works several muscle groups.

Keeping it safe: Children should always wear a proper fitting helmet when riding, and young children should ride on sidewalks or bicycle paths, not in the street. Teach older children the rules of the road when they begin to ride on the streets and do not allow them to ride at night without reflectors on their bike and proper reflective clothing.

Dancing - Children love to dance, and it is a great form of exercise. It takes no special equipment, just some music with a great beat. As long as there is a radio or CD player available, it's easy to get kids moving to the music.

Keeping it safe: There are few things you need to do keep dancing safe. Give children a large enough space to move in so they don't bump into things and hurt themselves and let them go wild.

Yoga - Here is an exercise that seems very adult to children, and since kids love to feel grown up, they like to do yoga. It is a simple exercise to do in the home and there is no need for any special equipment or clothing. Most libraries will have yoga for kids' books or DVD's so it's not even necessary to spend any money. This is an especially good exercise for kids who have trouble calming down or falling to sleep. A little yoga right before bedtime can calm them down and help them fall asleep more easily while giving them some much needed exercise.

Keeping it safe: Make sure that the children are doing yoga exercises that are specifically designed for kids. Sure, many kids are flexible, but some of the more advanced yoga poses can be harmful for children.

Walking - Another fabulous exercise that almost anyone can do that costs almost nothing. This is a great exercise for children that are struggling with weight problems. For children who are severely overweight and struggle with other exercises, walking can be the perfect solution. They can start out with a short walk around the block and work their way up to longer walks each day as they become more fit.

Keeping it safe: Proper walking shoes with good support should be worn. Also, children should be taught to stick to the sidewalk or a walking path and never to walk in the street. Younger children should always be accompanied by an adult and older children who are ready to go out for a walk by themselves should stick to an agreed upon route.

Playing Ball - Kicking a soccer ball, throwing a Frisbee, taking shots on the basketball court, or running the bases in a kickball game are all forms of exercise. Grab a ball (or Frisbee) and take children in the backyard or to a park for some games that also double as excellent exercise.

Keeping it safe: If you have got children of different ages playing together, keep it well supervised to make sure that the older children don't hurt the younger ones. Also, try to make sure that everyone is getting a fair turn.

Jump Ropes and Hula Hoops - These are great exercises that really get children's hearts pumping and improve their coordination all at the same time. The cost for equipment is very minimal and these exercises can be done outdoors or indoors if space permits. They are also very fun games and activities involving jump rope and hula hoops that most children enjoy.

Keeping it safe: Keep a safe distance between children as they jump rope or hula-hoop to ensure that they do not bump into each other and get hurt.

Children who get regular exercise have advantages over those who do not. They have more stamina, fewer health problems, better self-esteem, and an ability to control their weight more easily. So turn off the television, power down the computer, hide the handheld gaming devices, and then encourage children to get more exercise while providing them with a safe and fun environment in which to do so.

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About the Author

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