

Thanks a Billion!

WELL AWARE

Spending quality family time together is very important

A strong family finds that opportunities for quality time emerge from quantity time: The more time you spend together, the better chance you have of sharing quality experiences.

Eating meals together, talking about the events of the day, sharing joys and defeats, doing household chores together and spending some evenings popping corn and watching movies are examples of shared activities. Some families even schedule one evening every week for special family activities.

Doing things a child or spouse wants to do also sends a strong message of love. It's a good idea to identify the things family members want to do together. In my family, we spend our summers showing goats together. Every weekend we pack up the coolers, show equipment, children and goats, and we head to the next show.

How much time should families spend together? That varies from family to family. Families with young children usually spend the most time together because young children need a great deal of physical care and guidance. Families with teenagers may spend less time together because teens naturally want to spend more time with their friends. Single parents need a break from their children and may need more opportunity to enjoy the company of other adults.



Healthy families keep a good balance between “too much” and “not enough” time together. They spend enough time to satisfy all family members. Children learn to bring balance to their lives when they see their parents setting aside time for what they value.

Where should you start? Start with the family meal. “A family that dines together stays together” is a phrase that I have heard for years. Having a meal with your children away from distractions such as the TV, video games and cell phones can help start those

conversations that you would like to, or need to have with your children.

Posted by Suzanne Pish, MSU

August 26th is National Dog Day

Get outside and take your favorite buddy for an especially long walk today! Try and do double the amount of time or distance you normally do. Don't have a dog? Local animal shelters LOVE volunteers to visit and walk their dogs or may your neighbor's dog would like an extra walk. It's a win-win for you both!



“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

Albert Einstein

3 Ways to Exercise as a Family

If we as adults wish to create a future of happy, healthy, disease-free adults with our kids, it's time we start practicing what we preach. If we want healthy kids, it's time for us to be models of a healthy lifestyle.

Our kids model our behavior. Their attitudes and actions toward everything from nutrition to exercise to politics are shaped by our own actions and behaviors. If we want our kids to eat well, we need to eat well. If we want them to exercise, we need to exercise.

The above modeling creates a culture of wellness in the home. In this environment, children learn that healthy habits are a positive way of life, not punitive novelties sentenced to mom and dad for "eating too much yummy food".

Exercising as a family is not only a fun way to improve fitness, it's a way to cultivate the culture of wellness and develop positive exercise habits at a young age.

Below are some fun exercise-based family activities guaranteed to create smiles and sweat!

1. Sock Fight!

Everyone in the family gathers as many of their balled-up socks as they can carry. An area is selected as the "battle ground". This can be a living room, house, backyard, front yard, park, anywhere. On a "go" signal, everyone tries to throw and hit another family member with the balled up socks. The primary rule is you cannot throw from the same place twice.

Each "battle" lasts 2 minutes then everyone gathers up his or her "ammo" for 60 seconds. Five "battles" is 15 minutes of pretty intense exercise, assuming

everyone is moving. Points can be kept hitting a target or any other parameters. Safety rules appropriate to the environment are established.

2. Family Boot Camp

Each family member writes down 5 of his or her favorite bodyweight (or weighted, level appropriate) exercises, for a total of at least 20. Exercises can be dance moves, calisthenics, martial arts, anything physical that the entire family can do.



The family then goes for a walk, jog, or run and every 60 seconds, they do one of the exercises for 30 seconds. By the end of all of the exercises, it's been a 20- minute work out! Feel free to go into overtime!

3. Hide and Sweat!

The adults in the family write down 20 physical activities on separate small pieces of paper. These are then put in plastic Easter eggs and hid around the house. Kids are then tasked to find the eggs. When they find them they open them and the entire family performs the activity for the reps or amount of time given.

Putting a time limit on finding all of the eggs and doing all of the exercises makes it more interesting!

A family that exercises together stays together! Create a culture of wellness in your home to help our children grow to become happy, healthy, disease free adults!

From: wellnessmama.com

A scavenger hunt has all the makings of an excellent family activity. Everyone gets to participate whether it is an individual activity or in a teams. There are also elements of competition and suspense. Have a Nature Scavenger Hunt while on a family hike or the Tapehead Scavenger Hunt at a birthday or Christmas party. Most of all, a scavenger hunt creates stories that will never be forgotten. [Family Capers](#) has lots of great scavenger hunts to download and go!

Friendships

Friends are our family outside the closed walls of our house. They have a huge contribution in making us who we are as individuals. Their importance in life is indescribable. But these are certain points that will restate some of the facts that make friends so special and important:

Share secrets - Friends are the secret reservoirs. Friends are the ones to share all the little and large secrets and happenings of life.

Boost self-confidence - We may doubt our decisions and abilities, but our friends will never do so. They stand by us confidently making us believe in ourselves.

Comfort zone - Pajamas, messy buns, no makeup, drooling face, stinky sweat or running nose, they don't care about any of it! Our friends have seen us in the ugliest appearances and situations of life, and they still decided to stick by.

Away from loneliness - Being alone, away from the world, can be appealing at times but loneliness for extended periods becomes extremely depressing. Hence, friends come as the cure for loneliness.

Hilarious inside jokes - We all have those little hints and code words for the people we dislike that only our group of friends know. Those are the moments that remain enlightened in our hearts forever.

Partner in Crime - Friends are the permanent partner in our crimes. At the times of trouble, friends have



stayed by our side and shared the responsibilities with fun. They have the strange power of turning every bad moment into hilarious and memorable ones.

Listener - There are times when we want to rant and whine.

Friends lend us the ears to make these possible. They don't judge nor preach, rather listen to the nonsense coming out of our mouth pretending to understand.



The shoulder to cry on - When heartbreaks or other situations become extremely hard to tolerate, friends offer us their shoulder to shed our tears on.

Reality Check - Friends know us so well that they have the ability to predict and capture situations which we are in denial of. They bring the harsh truth in front of us.

Acceptance - They know us inside out. They know our flaws, weaknesses, ugly truths, dark past, and insecurities and still choose to remain by our side. Friends accept and love us for who we are.

Encouragement - At the most difficult endeavors and embarrassing decisions, we always find our friends cheering from the sidelines.

Understanding - No one in the world, understands our thinking, dreams and desires like friends do.

Laughter, adventure and fun! - Friends are the open and free access to ultimate laughs and fun times. Friends encourage us to try things we can never imagine doing.

Never miss the chances to appreciate our friends!

Nurture Your Relationships

Connect with your family

One of the biggest challenges for families to stay connected is the busy pace of life. But Blue Zones research states that the healthiest, longest-living people in the world all have something in common: they put their families first. Family support can provide comfort, support, and even influence better health outcomes while you are sick. Relationships and family author Mimi Doe recommends connecting with family by letting little grievances go, spending time together, and expressing love and compassion to one another.

Of course, the same practices apply to close friends as well. This is especially important if you don't have living family, or have experienced difficult circumstances, such as abuse, that would make it difficult for you to connect with your relatives.

Practice gratitude

Gratitude is one of the most accessible positive emotions, and its effects can strengthen friendships and intimate relationships. One 2010 study found that expressing gratitude toward a partner can strengthen the relationship, and this positive boost is felt by both parties—the one who expresses gratitude and the one who receives it. Remembering to say “thank you”.

Learn to forgive

It's normal for disagreements or betrayal to arise in relationships, but your choice about how to handle the hurt can have a powerful effect on the healing process. Choosing to forgive can bring about a variety of benefits, both physical and emotional. Fred Luskin, head of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, says it's easier to let go of the anger or hurt feelings associated with a circumstance if you remind yourself that much of your distress is really coming from the thoughts and feelings you are having right now while remembering the event—not the event itself. Don't be afraid to clearly articulate why you are upset, but once the other party has listened, be willing to lay down your anger and move on.

Be compassionate

Compassion is the willingness to be open to yourself and others, even in painful times, with a gentle, nonjudgmental attitude. When you feel compassionate toward another person—whether a romantic partner, friend, relative, or colleague—you open the gates for better communication and a stronger bond. This doesn't mean taking on the suffering of others, or absorbing their emotions. Rather, compassion is the practice of recognizing when someone else is unhappy or whose needs aren't being met and feeling motivated to help them.

Accept others

It is also important to be accepting of the other person in the relationship. Try to understand where the person is coming from rather than judge them. Have a

realistic acceptance of the other's strengths and weaknesses and remember that change occurs over time.

Create rituals together

With busy schedules and the presence of online social media that offer the façade of real contact, it's very easy to drift from friends. In order to nurture the closeness and support of friendships, you have to make an effort to connect. Gallup researcher Tom Rath has found that people who deliberately make time for gatherings or trips enjoy stronger relationships and more positive energy. An easy way to do this is to create a standing ritual that you can share and that doesn't create more stress—talking on the telephone on Fridays, for example, or sharing a walk during lunch breaks, are ways to keep in contact with the ones you care about the most.

Spend the right amount of time together

Gallup researchers Jim Harter and Raksha Arora found that people who spend 6-7 hours per day socializing (which could mean hanging out with friends, sharing meals with family, or even emailing a colleague) tend to be the happiest. In contrast, those who have zero interactions (or an exhausting overload of social time) feel more stressed. Knowing when to give your time to others and when to take some time for yourself can be crucial in maintaining balanced, healthy relationships as well as emotional wellbeing.

