

## Exercise and Movement

*“Finding time to exercise is hard... when you don’t wanna.” - Jim Gaffigan*

Our prehistoric ancestors exerted themselves daily while picking berries and running after or away from wild animals. Then once comfortably fed and sheltered they quit work immediately in order to store up energy to do it all over again tomorrow. Exercise then rest. **Back then each day began under a pressure toward “fitness” (pun intended).** Today, those of us privileged enough to ride out COVID-19 sheltered at home, food in the fridge, may be answering that prehistoric call to conserving energy.

**But just because we surviving doesn’t mean we are living our best.** *Purposely* overriding natural sedentary urges bestows HUGE rewards, including enhanced mood, better focus and concentration, increased productivity, and sounder sleep, and spending time outdoors magnifies these effects. It’s how we are meant to be.

**How much exercise is enough?** For adults, 10,000 steps per day is generally considered adequate to maintain health, and for kids that number jumps to around 12,000 to 15,000. 30 minutes of walking equals roughly 3000 steps, and active play for the same amount of time effectively *doubles* that!

**How much exercise is your family getting?** Until a couple months ago, the typical American adult achieved about half their recommended steps from wake-up to bedtime (your results may vary). Kids usually reached half their steps *during the school day alone*, and those who played actively for an hour or more after school—organized sports or just messing around—were fit indeed! With schools, offices, sports and gyms shut down, we are missing lots of otherwise built-in movement.

**The following are some ideas for incorporating more activity breaks into your family’s daily schedule.**

- **Start the day with a family walk** (after breakfast and meds). Fun fact: when adults are given Fitbits they walk, on average, 2,500 additional steps per day!
- Work together to construct an **obstacle course** - over, under, through... and the floor might be lava! Stopwatches optional.
- **Scavenger hunt.** Items to find might be specific (e.g. find a red sock) or better yet by category (e.g. something smooth, or something that rhymes with orange ;)
- Play **charades.**
- Plant a **garden.**
- Write friendly **notes for neighbors in chalk** on the sidewalk.
- And of course, pool **noodle battles.**

If you have creative suggestions we would love to hear them. And as always, we are here to help. [Kids On Up Psychotherapy](#) now offers private teletherapy sessions. Brief, one-time check-ins and ongoing therapy are available. Please consider psychotherapy as part of your care plan.

Stay Well,

Kids On Up Psychotherapy Staff