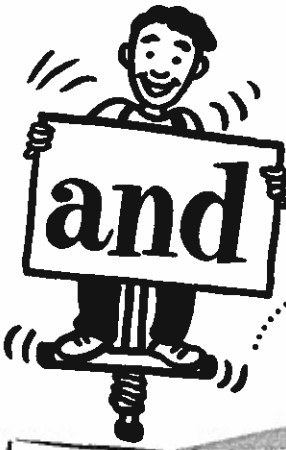


# Get Up and Go!



Put the fun in fitness! Here are ideas for adding physical activity to your child's schedule—month by month. Encourage your youngster to get at least an hour total of active play every day to keep him at the top of his game.

## JANUARY

**Theme:** Name one weekend each month "No TV Weekend." Spend the time playing instead.

**Copycat:** The leader announces an activity to be the "stopper" (say, hopping on one foot). Then, the leader quickly does a bunch of actions for the other player to copy (jumping jacks, silly dance). The game ends when the leader tricks the copycat into doing the stopper.

**More ideas:**

- Have 3-minute contests: Who can score the most baskets, jump rope the most times, or do the most push-ups in 3 minutes?
- Learn yoga (look for classes at your county parks and recreation department).
- Go sledding or ice-skating.



## FEBRUARY

**Theme:** Find ways to bring outdoor games inside.

**Mini soccer:** Place shoebox goals at opposite ends of the house. Using a small ball, take turns defending the goals and trying to score by steering the ball with your feet.

**More ideas:**

- Play balloon volleyball over an imaginary net.
- Clear a space in the basement or garage for rollerblading.
- Have an indoor "snowball" fight with loosely wadded newspaper balls.



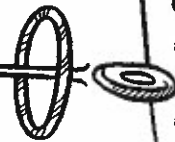
## MARCH

**Theme:** Look beyond organized sports. Invest in basic equipment (ball, jump rope), and invent your own games.

**Widen the river:** Lay two jump ropes a foot apart and parallel to each other. The space between the ropes is the river. Take turns jumping the river, widening the distance between the ropes after each turn. The last person able to jump the river wins.

**More ideas:**

- Dribble a basketball through a homemade obstacle course (around a lawn chair, over a picnic bench, between two bikes, and back).
- Hang a hula hoop from a clothesline as a target for Frisbee toss.
- Try to keep a badminton birdie in the air using only your palms.



## APRIL

**Theme:** Make the inactive active.

**Puzzle hunt:** Hide the pieces to a small jigsaw puzzle (say, 25 pieces) around the house. Set a timer for 15 minutes, and let your child race the clock to find the pieces and assemble the puzzle.



**More ideas:**

- When watching TV, have a sit-up contest during commercial breaks.
- Act out stories as you read them.
- During board games, assign an activity to each roll of the die. For example, hop on one foot five times each time a 1 is rolled, or walk around the table backward when a 2 is rolled.

## MAY

**Theme:** Use activities as treats.

**Family yard sale:** Cleaning out closets, setting up tables, and clearing up afterward are all good exercise. Treat everyone to a summer membership at the local swimming pool with the money you earn.

**More ideas:**

- Celebrate special occasions at a mini-golf course.
- Make bowling or another activity a reward for good grades.
- Give homemade gift certificates for games of catch or weekend hiking trips.



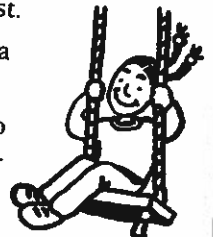
## JUNE

**Theme:** Explore playgrounds, parks, and school yards.

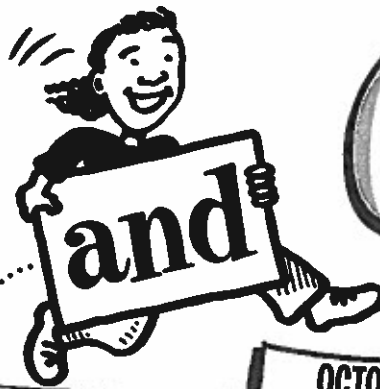
**Heads/tails hike:** On the way to the playground, get in an extra walk. At the end of each block, flip a coin. For heads, turn left. For tails, turn right. Flip 10 times before walking to the playground.

**More ideas:**

- See who can swing the longest.
- Play hopscotch, or climb on a jungle gym.
- Take along a piece of chalk to draw a straight line on the playground. Pretend it's a balance beam, and tiptoe across it.



# Get Up and Go!



## JULY

**Theme:** Enjoy warm summer evenings by extending outdoor play past daylight hours.

**Spotlight hide-and-seek:** "It" carries a flashlight to shine on people when he finds them. When hit with the spotlight, players must run for the base before being tagged. A tagged player becomes the new "It."

**More ideas:**

- Get a glow-in-the-dark Frisbee for nighttime games.
- Catch fireflies (and release them).
- Go on a "star hike." Take a few sleeping bags, walk to a safe spot, lie down, and look up.



## OCTOBER

**Theme:** Tailor activities to your youngster's interests and abilities.

**Activity box:** Give your child an index-card box and a stack of 25 index cards. Let her fill out 15 cards with activities she loves and 10 with ones she would like to try. Use the cards as boredom busters.

**More ideas:**

- Interest imaginative youngsters in an active game of charades.
- Challenge contest-driven kids to simple competitions, such as who can do the most push-ups in a minute or keep a hula hoop going the longest.
- Invite a child who loves the outdoors to go on a hike.



## NOVEMBER

**Theme:** Get the whole family involved.

**Oldies but goodies:** Ask grandparents to teach you and your youngster how to play a game they remember from their childhood, such as kick the can or stickball.

**More ideas:**

- Go on a family bike ride through a local park. (Remember to wear helmets.)
- Visit a museum and walk, walk, walk.
- Have a fire drill. Discuss the closest exits, and see how fast everyone can crawl from bed to outside.



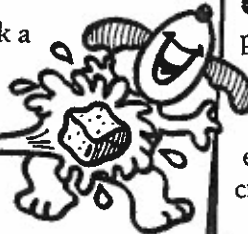
## AUGUST

**Theme:** Get a workout while working.

**Splat:** Wash the car together. When finished, play a game of dodge ball using a wet sponge as the ball.

**More ideas:**

- Take your dog for a walk. No dog? Walk a neighbor's.
- Clean out the garage or rearrange furniture together.
- Spend an afternoon picking up litter in your local park.



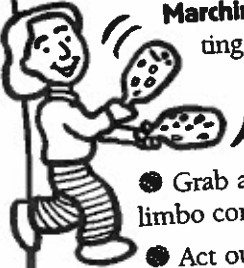
## SEPTEMBER

**Theme:** Use music and rhythm to turn playtime into active time.

**Marching band:** Make homemade instruments by putting dried beans or pasta inside plastic containers. Turn on some music, and shake the instruments while dancing or parading around.

**More ideas:**

- Grab a broom or swimming-pool noodle and hold a limbo contest while music plays.
- Act out the animals while singing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" (chickens flap wings, donkeys kick, cats stretch).
- Borrow learn-to-dance videos from the library, and practice some new moves.



## DECEMBER

**Theme:** Share the fun.

**Party time:** Host a party and play games of musical chairs and hot potato.

**More ideas:**

- Learn to juggle or play Chinese jump rope (check your library for instruction books). Teach your new games to three people.
- Swap equipment with neighbors so you can try new sports without buying the gear.
- Join a karate class at the local community center.



## Nutrition Nuggets