



# Outdoor Exercises for the Whole Family

Exercising as a family helps role model an active lifestyle, which can be particularly important for children. Family activities strengthen relationships, create lasting memories, and enhance feelings of safety and security.

Exercising outdoors as a family also brings numerous health benefits. Research suggests that regular outdoor activity can lead to improved mental health, enhanced mood, and decreased anxiety.<sup>2</sup> Being in nature has added benefits, including lower blood pressure, higher vitamin D levels, and reduced stress, making outdoor exercise a win-win for everyone involved.<sup>3</sup>

### Here are some fun outdoor activities that your family can do together:<sup>1</sup>

- **Hiking:** Explore local trails and parks while enjoying the scenery and wildlife.
- **Riding:** Take your bike or wheelchair for a ride around your neighborhood or park and enjoy the fresh air.
- **Gardening:** Digging, planting, and weeding provide great physical activity and foster teamwork.
- **Picnics with Games:** Pack a lunch and include games like frisbee, soccer, or tag to stay active.
- **Nature Walks:** Engage in a leisurely walk while identifying plants and animals you encounter. Check with your local Parks & Recreation Department for information on accessibility and hours.
- **Beach Days:** Swim, play beach volleyball, or build sandcastles, combining fun and fitness.
- **Outdoor Fitness Classes:** Look for family-friendly yoga or Zumba sessions in nearby parks.

If you have young children, seek out age-appropriate fitness options. Dance parties in the backyard, scavenger hunts in the park, or simple games like Simon Says can be entertaining and fun. Consider inclement weather and have a backup plan ready. On rainy days, focus on indoor activities such as family yoga, dancing in your living room, or a mini obstacle course using cushions and furniture. On hot days, exercise in the early morning or late evening to avoid the heat. Being adaptable allows you to maintain a consistent routine, regardless of weather conditions. Prioritizing physical activity is essential not only for your own health but for the health of your entire family.



1. Outdoorsy Families. "100+ Outdoor Family Activities." Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://outdoorsyfamilies.com/100-outdoor-family-activities/>  
2. Gladwell VF, Brown DK, Wood C, Sandercock GR, Barton JL. The great outdoors: how a green exercise environment can benefit all. *Extrem Physiol Med*. 2013;2(1):3. Published 2013 Jan 3. doi:10.1186/2046-7648-2-3  
3. Healthline. "8 Health Benefits of Getting Back to Nature and Spending Time Outside." May 28, 2022. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://www.healthline.com/health/health-benefits-of-being-outdoors>



## Fitting in Fitness

Fitting physical activity into daily life can be challenging at times, but it is essential to your health. Whether you work from home or have a daily commute, finding ways to increase movement throughout the day can significantly enhance your wellbeing.

**Here are some practical strategies to help you incorporate more movement into your workday:**

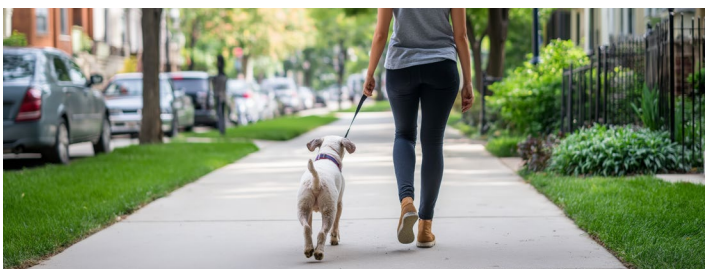
- **Establish a Daily Exercise Routine:** Set aside a specific time each day for exercise. To get started, aim for 10-15 minutes each day and make small increases each week.<sup>2</sup> Consistency will help you form a habit.
- **Take Short Breaks:** Set a timer to remind yourself to take breaks every hour or so. Use these moments to stretch or step outside your workspace for a short walk. Even a few minutes of movement can refresh your mind and boost productivity.
- **Deskercise:** If you cannot leave your work area, try some desk-friendly exercises.<sup>1</sup> Alternate between standing and walking throughout the day to keep your energy levels up.
- **Make Meetings Active:** Suggest walking meetings with colleagues. Instead of sitting in a conference room or standing in your work area, take your discussions outdoors. This not only increases your steps but can also lead to more creative thinking.
- **Use the Stairs:** Choose stairs over elevators whenever you can. Climbing stairs is an excellent way to enhance cardiovascular fitness while boosting your step count.
- **Make Errands Active:** When running errands, park farther away from the entrance to increase your walking distance. If you are in an area where walking is safe, consider walking to nearby locations instead of driving.

If you have physical limitations, modify exercises as needed. Experiment with new activities until you discover ones you enjoy and look forward to.<sup>3</sup> Be creative and incorporate more activity into your daily life. The key is to make movement a priority. Every minute of movement counts and contributes to your overall health.

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1. Healthline. "30 Office Exercises to Try Right Now." January 4, 2021. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness/office-exercises>  
2. American Heart Association. "10-minute Workout Anywhere." 2020. Accessed October 26, 2024. [https://www.heart.org/-/media/Healthy-Living-Files/Fitness/10-minute-Workout-infographic.pdf?sc\\_lang=en](https://www.heart.org/-/media/Healthy-Living-Files/Fitness/10-minute-Workout-infographic.pdf?sc_lang=en)  
3. Mayo Clinic. "5 simple ways to fit a workout into any schedule." December 23, 2021. Accessed October 26, 2024. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/fit-a-workout-into-any-schedule>



# Design a Personalized Fitness Plan

Regular physical activity is essential for maintaining a healthy weight, reducing the risk of chronic diseases, improving mental health, and enhancing your quality of life. The key to maintaining a consistent exercise routine lies in discovering activities you genuinely enjoy. Designing a personalized fitness plan involves tailoring your routine to fit your unique needs, preferences, and physical limitations.

Here are some steps to help you create an effective and enjoyable fitness plan:<sup>1, 2</sup>

- 1. Consult Your Doctor:** Before beginning any new fitness plan, consult with your healthcare provider, especially if you have a pre-existing health condition. They can provide valuable advice and ensure that your chosen activities are safe.
- 2. Assess Your Fitness Level:** Evaluate your current fitness level. Consider factors such as your endurance, strength, flexibility, and any existing physical limitations or health conditions.
- 3. Set Realistic Goals:** Define what you want to achieve with your fitness plan and set SMART goals. Goals could range from improving cardiovascular health to increasing strength or simply enjoying physical activity more.
- 4. Choose Activities You Enjoy:** Select exercises that align with your interests. Honoring your preferences and selecting activities that feel more like play will increase the likelihood that you will stick with your plan. If you do not enjoy running, look for other ways to move your body.
- 5. Incorporate Variety:** Mixing different types of activities can prevent boredom and keep you motivated, while producing greater benefits. For example, combining strength training with yoga or Pilates can enhance flexibility and muscle tone.
- 6. Allow Time for Recovery:** While it may be tempting to go full throttle and exclude rest days, be sure to give your body time to recover.
- 7. Monitor and Adjust:** Regularly assess your progress and make necessary adjustments to your plan every 4 to 6 weeks.<sup>3</sup> As you improve or if your circumstances change, it is essential to adapt your fitness routine accordingly.

Designing a personalized fitness plan is about finding what works best for you and sticking with it. With dedication and a realistic plan, you can achieve a level of fitness that enhances both your physical and mental wellbeing.

1. Ace Fitness. "How to Make a Workout Plan from Scratch." January 17, 2023. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://www.acefitness.org/about-ace/press-room/in-the-news/8249/how-to-make-a-workout-plan-from-scratch-livestrong/>

2. Healthline. "How to Start Exercising: A Beginner's Guide to Working Out." Updated on February 1, 2023. Accessed October 19, 2024. <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-start-exercising>

3. Verywell Fit. "What a Complete Workout Schedule Looks Like." May 19, 2024. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.verywellfit.com/sample-workout-schedule-1230758>



## PROTEIN-PACKED BUDDHA BOWL

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### Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1/2 cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 cup roasted sweet potatoes
- 1/2 avocado, sliced
- 1/4 cup edamame
- Handful of mixed greens
- Tahini dressing

### Instructions

1. In a bowl, arrange the cooked quinoa, chickpeas, roasted sweet potatoes, avocado slices, edamame, and mixed greens.
2. Drizzle with tahini dressing and mix gently to combine all ingredients.
3. Dive into your nourishing and energizing protein-packed Buddha bowl!



### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 400

Protein: 18g

Carbohydrates: 45g

Fat: 15g

Fiber: 12g