

Family Fitness (When Spending Evenings and Weekends at the Soccer Field Just Isn't Your Thing)

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What is fitness? Popular culture would have us think we need to have six-pack abs and run seven-minute miles, but those ideals are NOT necessary for everyone.

Fitness Defined

Fitness is the ability to perform all the necessary biological functions the human body is designed to do. It is the ability to work, play, and perform all the tasks we need and want to do with all the energy needed to feel vibrant and capable.

Think Outside the Chair

Have you heard that “sitting is the new smoking”? We have created a whole society that has superhuman sitting skills— we travel by sitting, we learn by sitting, we work by sitting, we eat by sitting, we are entertained while sitting. This all takes a toll on our posture and overall health and in most cases eventually leads to pain and the numberless modern diseases of captivity we are plagued with. Every joint and muscle in our bodies needs to twist and bend and contract and stretch regularly to stay healthy. The saying “Use it or lose it” completely applies here. When we hold our bodies in one position for hours and hours, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year it is inevitable that some parts will atrophy, others will over-compensate, and overall imbalance, pain, or worse will be the result.

The good news for us homeschoolers is that we don't have to be stuck in chairs. You can greatly improve

the physical fitness of your entire family by adding movement into all aspects of your routine. It is super simple and takes no added time! Sit on the floor, stand, squat, and walk while you learn.

Any (or all) of these things will help make fitness part of your family culture:

- **Set the example.** Find something you love, whether it be going for walks, riding a bike, swimming, yoga, Zumba—anything really, and do it regularly. Let your kids see you doing it, and maybe even let them do it with you sometimes.

- **Set a family goal and plan a great reward.** This could be a big hike for which you need to train, a 5k walk/run, being able to double-dutch jump rope, or consecutive days of EVERYONE doing 15 minutes of trampoline jumping. Find something that could push your limits or would fulfill a need for one of you and do it together!

- **Incorporate family exercise into your morning devotional time or another routine time of your typical day.** At least three mornings a week, we get out a timer and each child and I pick an exercise we each will lead for one or two minutes (depending on intensity). With six kids and mom that ends up being at least 15 minutes of great high intensity interval training! We can't help but smile after doing jumping jacks led by a three-year-old!

I set up a Pinterest board with lots of ideas:

<https://www.pinterest.com/seedpod/homeschool-pe/>