



## Energy Out: Daily Physical Activity Recommendations

Physical activity (</English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx>) in children and adolescents improves strength and endurance, builds healthy bones and lean muscles, develops motor skills (</English/ages-stages/toddler/fitness/Pages/From-Motor-Skills-to-Sports-Skills.aspx>) and coordination, reduces fat, and promotes emotional well-being (*reduces feelings of depression and anxiety*). Activities should be appropriate for their age and fun, as well as offer variety.



*The daily recommendation for physical activity for children 6 years and older is at least 60 minutes per day. Active play is the best exercise for younger children.*

The types of physical activity should be moderate to vigorous. Vigorous activity is activity that makes you breathe hard and sweat. During vigorous activity, it would be difficult to have a talk with someone. Some activities, such as bicycling (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Biking.aspx>), can be of moderate or vigorous intensity, depending upon level of effort.

The 60 minutes does not need to be done all at once. Physical activity can be broken down into shorter blocks of time. For example, 20 minutes walking to and from school (</English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Safety-On-The-Way-To-School.aspx>), 10 minutes jumping rope, and 30 minutes at the playground all add up to 60 minutes of physical activity. If your child is not active, start from where you are and build from there.

## Types of Sports and Activities for Children and Teens (and Parents, Too!)

### Aerobic Exercises

- Use body's large muscle groups
- Strengthen the heart and lungs
- Examples of moderate-intensity aerobic exercises include:
  - Brisk walking
  - Bicycle riding
  - Dancing (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Ballet-and-Dance.aspx>)
  - Hiking
  - Rollerblading
  - Skateboarding
  - Martial arts (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Martial-Arts.aspx>) such as karate or tae kwon do (can be vigorous too)
- Examples of vigorous-intensity aerobic activities include:
  - Basketball (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Basketball-and-Volleyball.aspx>)
  - Bicycle riding
  - Games such as tag
  - Ice or field hockey (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Ice-Hockey.aspx>)
  - Jumping rope
  - Martial arts
  - Running (</English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Running.aspx>)

- [Soccer](/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Soccer.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Soccer.aspx)
- [Swimming](/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Swimming.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Swimming.aspx)
- Tennis

## Muscle-Strengthening (or Resistance) Activities

- Work major muscle groups of the body (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulder, arms)
- Examples of muscle-strengthening activities include:
  - Games such as tug-of-war
  - Push-ups or modified push-ups (with knees on the floor)
  - Resistance exercises using body weight or resistance bands
  - Rope or tree climbing
  - Sit-ups (curl-ups or crunches)
  - Swinging on playground equipment/bars

## Bone-Strengthening (Weight-Bearing) Activities

- Tone and build muscles and bone mass
- Can be [aerobic](/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Aerobic-Training.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Aerobic-Training.aspx) exercises and muscle-strengthening activities
- Examples of bone-strengthening activities include:
  - Basketball
  - Hopping, skipping, jumping
  - [Gymnastics](/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Gymnastics.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Gymnastics.aspx)
  - Jumping rope
  - Running
  - Tennis
  - [Volleyball](/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Basketball-and-Volleyball.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Basketball-and-Volleyball.aspx)
  - Push-ups
  - Resistance exercises using body weight or resistance bands

## About Strength Training

[Strength training](/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Strength-Training.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/sports/Pages/Strength-Training.aspx) (*or resistance training*) uses a resistance to increase an individual's ability to exert force. It involves the use of weight machines, free weights, bands or tubing, or the individual's own body weight. This is not the same as Olympic [lifting](/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Weight-Training-and-Lifting.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Weight-Training-and-Lifting.aspx), power lifting, or body building, which are not recommended for children. Check with your child's doctor before starting any strength training exercises.

## Additional Information:

- [Energy In: Recommended Food & Drink Amounts for Children](/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Energy-In-Recommended-Food-Drink-Amounts-for-Children.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Energy-In-Recommended-Food-Drink-Amounts-for-Children.aspx)
- [Encouraging Your Child to be Physically Active](/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx)
- [Finding Time to Be Active](/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Finding-Time-to-Be-Active.aspx) (/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Finding-Time-to-Be-Active.aspx)
- [Increasing Physical Activity During Preschool Years](/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Increasing-Physical-Activity-in-Preschool-Years.aspx) (/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Increasing-Physical-Activity-in-Preschool-Years.aspx)
- [How Teens Can Stay Fit](/English/ages-stages/teen/fitness/Pages/How-Teens-Can-Stay-Fit.aspx) (/English/ages-stages/teen/fitness/Pages/How-Teens-Can-Stay-Fit.aspx)
- [The Healthy Children Show: Energy Balance for School-Age Kids \(Video\)](/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/nutrition/Pages/The-Healthy-Children-Show-Energy-Balance-for-School-Age-Kids-Video.aspx) (/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/nutrition/Pages/The-Healthy-Children-Show-Energy-Balance-for-School-Age-Kids-Video.aspx)

**Last Updated** 7/16/2014

**Source** Energy In Energy Out: Finding the Right Balance for Your Children (Copyright © 2014 American Academy of Pediatrics)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Source

Energy Out: Daily Physical Activity Recommendations. (2014, July 16). American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved September 24, 2024, from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Energy-Out-Daily-Physical-Activity-Recommendations.aspx>