

10 Low or No-Cost Ideas for Families to **STAY ACTIVE** All Summer Long

by Michelle "Shelly" Vicari

For kids, summer is a time for fun and freedom. Although it may seem easier to keep children active during these months, it can still be challenging. The appeal of smartphones, video games and binge-worthy TV shows can lead to a summer spent mostly sitting down.

To promote good health and prevent chronic diseases, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children and teens aged 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. However, many children and teens do not meet these guidelines.

But what if you don't have expensive vacations planned, filled with physical activities like snorkeling, zip-lining or exploring theme parks? Here are 10 suggestions to get the whole family moving this summer without breaking the bank.

Family-Friendly Activity Ideas

1. Create an obstacle course in your backyard or at a local park. You don't have to go all out like American Ninja Warrior. Use things you already have (hula hoops, jump ropes, relay race accessories, hopscotch) to make an obstacle course or circuit of activities. Try to beat your own best time.



2. Turn up the music and dance! Three to four songs are roughly 10 minutes. Let each person choose 10 minutes' worth of music. Dancing is a great way to get the whole family moving.

3. Use YouTube to learn iconic dances like "The Cha-Cha Slide," "The Macarena," or "The Tootsie Roll." You can also master signature moves like "The Running Man" or the legendary "Moonwalk." Join in on the latest TikTok dance challenge.



4. Play some classic backyard games like Hide and Seek, Simon Says, Freeze Tag, Duck Duck Goose, or gather some neighborhood kids and play a game of Kick Ball. Grab some sidewalk chalk and create a giant hopscotch board.

5. Hold spoon races. You'll need hard-boiled or plastic eggs and wooden or plastic spoons. Each family member places a hardboiled egg on a spoon and tries to dash from one end of the yard to the other without dropping the egg. If the egg drops, you have to start over from the beginning.

6. Go on a walking photo scavenger hunt. Grab your cell phone and go outside. Take pictures of the items from our list on this page. Enjoy the excitement of the search while creating a visual record of your summer adventures. Forgot your list at home? Look for 10 red items or 10 blue items.



PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Take a walk in the neighborhood to find these items and snap a photo.



Red car



Yellow flower



Motorcycle



Basketball hoop



Bird feeder



Something with the number "2" on it



Mailbox



American flag



Fire hydrant



Something furry



Stroller



Something round



Butterfly



Something that starts with a "W"



Pickup truck



Blue door

7.

Choose a country and try one of its traditional games. A few ideas: Italy (Bocce), England (Croquet) or Trinidad (Limbo). Set a goal for your family: how many new games can you discover before the end of the summer? Extend the fun by cooking a traditional recipe from the same country.

8.

Volunteer to take part in a park, beach or community clean-up. Find a clean-up near you at **EarthDay.org**. Not only will you stay active for the day, but the planet benefits, too. It's a double win!

9.

Stair climbing is a fantastic way to get physical activity. Take a moment to look around; you'll find stairs everywhere — inside offices, apartment buildings, and even the bleachers in high school stadiums. Have each family member keep track of how many steps they've climbed over the summer.

10.

Take a walking tour of your city or town and explore its attractions. Visit local museums, monuments and historic landmarks to learn about the area's history. Enjoy local parks and lookout points with beautiful views. Don't forget to cross famous bridges and climb tall buildings.

Remember, staying active is important for your overall health and well-being, and it doesn't have to cost a lot of money. I hope these ideas have inspired you to go outside, be active and have fun with your family this summer!

About the Author:

Michelle "Shelly" Vicari, OAC Senior Program Manager and Past OAC Chair, majored in Child Development and Family Studies and Political Science at San Diego State University. She was formerly the Curriculum Director of the largest Child Care Centers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in Southern California. She has authored numerous curriculum guides for teachers working with young children and was lucky enough to once meet Mr. Fred Rogers!



Bocce Ball



City Walking Tour



Beach Clean-up



Stair climbing



Duck, Duck, Goose



Croquet



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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