

Just Get Movin'!

"Can you believe that those adults next door are running around like a bunch of kids, playing tag?" Kathleen asked. "I've never seen anything like it in my life. Who are these people anyway, Juanita?"

"Believe it or not, that's my P.E. teacher," Juanita replied. "She invited some friends over to show them that fitness can be fun."

Would you believe a story like this one? According to the Green Bay Press Gazette, it's true. Stephanie Giannunzio, a physical fitness teacher at Franklin Middle School in Green Bay, Wisconsin, actually played tag with a bunch of adults.

Adults are learning that physical activity is important if they want to live long, healthy lives. The same is true for children.

According to a report by the Surgeon General, about half of the young people in America ages 12 to 21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis. About 14 percent reported no recent physical activity. This has led to a serious problem in American children. One out of every four kids is overweight.

Being overweight doesn't just affect how you look; it affects your health too. Exercise, even a little bit of exercise, will help you to use up some calories that might otherwise stay with you as extra fat that you don't need. If you get moderate exercise regularly, your body will burn the calories and keep you at a healthy weight. Being active regularly can also put you into a better mood when you are feeling down, and keep anxiety away.

Believe it or not, the path toward heart disease and high blood pressure can begin in childhood. Fortunately, regular activity can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease. It can also reduce the risk of other health problems like diabetes, colon cancer, depression, and osteoporosis (oss-tee-oh-puh-ROE-sis; weak bones).

Fitting Fitness Into Your Day

Your life is busy with school, homework, friends, chores, favorite TV shows, and video games. So where do you find time to get up and move around? Here are some ways to fit fitness in.

- Are you planning a family night? Try a night of bowling, miniature golf, skating at the rink, going to an aquatic park, or even walking around the mall instead of sitting through a movie.
- Are you staying home and watching TV? Use the commercial breaks as fitness breaks instead of snack breaks. Each time there is a commercial, see how many times you can trot up and down the stairs, jog in place, jump rope in the garage, run up and down the hall, or grab your



little brother and march around the house until the show is back on. During the next commercial break, do sit-ups, push-ups, or stretches. Each evening you can concentrate on a different part of the body. Work up to doing more activities as you feel yourself getting stronger. The next time you watch the show on TV, challenge yourself to see if you can outdo what you did the last time.

- Are you trying to think of what you want for a holiday or birthday gift? Why not ask for a membership to an indoor pool, a pass to the ice rink, new in-line skates, a skateboard, or those dance lessons you have been thinking about?
- Are your parents driving you everywhere? Why not ride your bike instead? Or walk whenever possible. How about taking the stairs instead of the elevator?
- Are you trying to think of ways to earn a little extra cash? Offer to do more than your weekly chores around the house to help you and your bank account get in shape. You could vacuum, mop, wash the car, mow the grass, weed the garden, shovel snow (in season, of course), paint the fence, scrub the walls, walk the dog, or take the neighbor's child for a walk in the stroller. Think of some other chores that will get you moving.

At school, join an athletic club or try out for a sport. It will help you get some regular activity. You'll make friends who want to be active too.

Movin' Schools--And More

Many people in America are becoming concerned about the shape Americans are in. As a result, many groups are partnering with communities to encourage children and teens to become more active. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one agency that is putting money into communities that are willing to be active.

One program that the CDC is helping to fund is called "Movin' Schools." This program is currently in use throughout Wisconsin and may be used in other states soon. "Movin' Schools" offers points to students for exercise. And the point total is doubled if the student exercises with a parent. At the end of the year, 30 of the winning schools are granted up to \$2,000 for the activities they accomplished.

The CDC has also sponsored a program called Kids-Walk-to-School. It involves the community and the school in providing students with safe walking and bicycling routes to school.

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS) states that "One of the most important messages of the new century is [that] physical activity is essential for the highest quality of life for all ages." To encourage regular activity, the PCPFS has an award called the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA). To qualify, you must be active 60 minutes a day, five days a week, for six weeks. There is an activity log on-line at www.fitness.gov under the President's Challenge for PALA and other fitness awards. It must be filled out and signed by an adult in order for you to receive your award. You can keep qualifying for the award throughout the year.

As you can see, there are plenty of fun ways to exercise more. And the key to any exercise program is to just get movin'!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the Surgeon General, how many American kids are overweight?

- A. one out of every seven kids
- B. one out of every six kids
- C. one out of every five kids
- D. one out of every four kids

2. This passage describes the problem of childhood obesity. According to the passage, the author suggests all of the following are solutions EXCEPT

- A. drink beverages containing caffeine
- B. try out for playing a sport at school
- C. exercise during TV commercial breaks
- D. take the stairs instead of the elevator

3. Which of these conclusions is supported by the passage?

- A. Fit kids won't need to exercise when they are adults.
- B. To exercise properly, you have to belong to a gym.
- C. Being active regularly has many health benefits.
- D. Exercise only helps if you do it every single day.

4. Read the following sentences from the passage:

"One program that the CDC is helping to fund is called 'Movin' Schools...' The CDC has also sponsored a program called Kids-Walk-to-School. It involves the community and the school in providing students with safe walking and bicycling routes to school

As used in the passage, the word **sponsored** means

- A. paid the cost of
- B. thought of an idea
- C. stopped watching
- D. talked proudly of

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe
- A. why physical fitness teacher Stephanie Giannunzio plays tag with adults
 - B. why physical activity is important and how to fit exercise into the day
 - C. the reasons why people's lives are too busy to find time for exercise
 - D. why American children and adults are so overweight and unhealthy
6. Describe one of the benefits of physical activity using information from the passage.
7. Why might the program "Movin' Schools" want to reward a student with more points if they exercise with a parent? Give an example from the text.
8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Stephanie Giannunzio played tag _____ a group of adults to show them that exercise can be fun.

- A. beside
- B. with
- C. like
- D. over

9. **Vocabulary Word:** aquatic: relating to water.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: