

Adult classes that run at the same time as swimming lessons, for example, encourage parents and children to exercise at the same time but doing different things. Think ahead how you can organise your time: you could fit in a twenty or twenty five minute high intensity interval training work out in the gym while a swimming lesson is going on. Remember that every minute counts and you're better off doing three half hour sessions a week than waiting for a chance to complete an hour's workout in peace (that simply may not be possible if you have young children!)

**Here are some things top tips from active families.**

- Go outside - to walk, cycle and play in the park.
- Make time for exercise - schedule it in and make it happen.
- Snack well - have healthy food in the house and pack nutritious snacks.
- Encourage each other: it's harder to be lazy if everyone else is active!
- Try new things - don't get stuck in a rut.
- Share meals when possible - it's good social time and encourages everyone to eat home cooked food and parents can exercise portion control
- Make exercise fun: try a new walking route or invite friends along.

For advice on family activities, youth classes/clubs and timetables visit [www.freedom-leisure.co.uk](http://www.freedom-leisure.co.uk) or pop into your nearest centre.

# Helping your children to fulfil their true academic potential

**W**orthing Leisure's Business Development Manager, Lynda Nurse, investigates the link between exercise and education and gives us some top tips for motivating our youngsters and allowing them to fulfil their full potential.



Most of us are aware of the benefits of regular exercise but a large number of us are physically inactive and this in turn affects our children and their ability to achieve their full academic potential.

As with adults, exercise helps children learn interpersonal skills, particularly when playing team sports such as netball, football or hockey. Regular exercise also helps children maintain a healthy body weight and keeping physically active helps build and maintain strong, healthy muscles, bones and joints. In addition, children who play sports and exercise are more likely to sleep well, stay focused and perform better at school.

University College London researchers within the Institute of Child Health undertook the biggest ever UK-wide scientific

analysis of primary school children's activity levels earlier this year. They found that just 51% of the 6,500 children they monitored achieved the recommended hour of physical activity each day. Girls were found to be much less active with just 38% achieving the one hour objective in comparison to 63% of boys.

These figures are alarming, especially considering the fact that children tend to do less activity as they get older.

Additional research conducted by the Universities of Strathclyde and Dundee found that, in a study of about 5,000 children, strong links were evident between exercise and exam success in subjects such as English, maths and science. Results showed an increase in performance levels for every seventeen minutes

boys exercised and every twelve minutes for girls. The authors claim that one hours exercise each day can potentially boost children's GCSE results by an entire grade. Interestingly enough, the effect was particularly marked for girls and science. Further investigation is required but what is clear is that these findings, publicised in the British Journal of Sports Medicine could have obvious implications for public health and education.

**So what sports are most beneficial?**

With the right support and encouragement, chances are that there are a few sports that will spark your child's interest. Activities must be tailored to

individual needs and age. For example, toddlers and pre-schoolers are too young for organised sports but can swim, run, throw, tumble and catch. For children between the ages of six and nine, activities such as gymnastics, football, tennis and running may be more suitable. From the ages of ten to twelve, children are much more able to understand strategy and are more ready to take on complex skill sports such as basketball and hockey.

**The British Heart Foundation recommends the following activity tips for parents:**

- Ask children what activities they enjoy. Encourage them to follow their interest and make



## 50 family challenges

One of our younger readers, Harvey Guénier aged eleven, sent us a list of fifty things that he and his family aimed to do together this year.

Harvey's list included a diversity of challenges; riding a mega long zip wire, swimming in the sea in winter, building a bush camp and sleeping in it, learning to play a tune on a musical instrument, helping a charity, entering a writing competition and raising chickens and eating their eggs were just a few of the ideas on Harvey's family's inventory.

The ABC team thought this was a great idea. Why not draft your own list of family challenges for the next year? Harvey drew up a chart that can record the date his family completes the challenge and also has space to give each finished challenge a rating out of ten. Have fun fulfilling your family's dreams, and good luck to Harvey, we hope you complete them all!

activity fun. Make a kite and fly it together, teach them to skip or use a hula hoop.  
• Invite other children around to play and get them involved in activities such as football, throwing a Frisbee or even playing a game of 'it'.  
• Encourage children to play games around the house such as hide and seek.

**It doesn't matter how you do it just as long as they get a full hour of exercise a day!**

don't forget, you don't need to do the full hour all at once. This can be split up over the course of the day.

And it's not just about the children. Tackling our own potentially negative associations with exercise is often an intrinsic factor. With GCSEs, A Levels and degrees a long way behind the majority of us, it may be too late to improve our grades but it is never too late to improve our fitness levels. Joining in with our children is a great way of motivating ourselves and allows us to lead by example and encourage a more permanent change in behavioural patterns.

There are so many things that can be done. What about going rock pooling, bowling or skate boarding? Dr Anne Hoskins of Public Health England suggested another alternative - "The new school year is the perfect time to make healthy changes, swapping short car or bus journeys with walking or scooting to school".

It doesn't matter how you do it just as long as they get a full hour of exercise a day! The key thing is to make it fun. And

Worthing Leisure have a wide range of activities available for both adults and children and offer a service to schools whereby after-school fitness classes can be run for the children. For further details in regards to all Worthing Leisure activities, please visit [www.worthingleisure.co.uk](http://www.worthingleisure.co.uk)

### Join 'team Rockinghorse' for the Brighton Marathon

As sponsors of all their fundraising activity for both the Brighton Half Marathon and the Brighton Marathon 2014, the support from Have a Heart has allowed Rockinghorse the opportunity to recruit more runners than ever this year.

All runners from both charities are supporting sick children and babies in Sussex, and every penny of sponsorship will go directly to Rockinghorse who are fundraising for a very special project - a brand new, non-surgical unit for the children's A&E department at the Alex.

All Have a Heart and Rockinghorse places for the Brighton Half Marathon are now sold out, so the Brighton Marathon is the last opportunity to run for the charity. Registration costs £49 per person and minimum sponsorship is £475. For more information or to book your place for the Brighton Marathon 2014 on Sunday 6 April, please contact the marathon team at Have a Heart on 03333 217 000, or email [haveaheart@heart.co.uk](mailto:haveaheart@heart.co.uk)

Rockinghorse is also looking for youngsters to take part in the Shlurp! Mini Mile race which is taking place the day before the Brighton Marathon, on Saturday 5 April at 11am. Those interested can contact the Rockinghorse office on 01273 330044 for a sponsorship form.

To find out more about Rockinghorse and the work they do, visit [www.rockinghorse.org.uk](http://www.rockinghorse.org.uk)

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