



STUDENTS

Why Physical Activity Matters for Youth

Staying active isn't just about sports—it's about feeling your best, having fun, and staying healthy as you grow. No matter your age or ability, movement helps your brain, body, and mood in big ways. Here's why physical activity is so important:

Boosts Brain Power

- Active kids tend to score up to 40% higher on tests than their less active peers.
- Just 20 minutes of movement can help with focus and doing better in class.
- Exercise also helps with decision-making, creativity, and solving problems.
- It reduces stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression—especially helpful in middle and high school.

- ✓ **Elementary Students:** Movement can help you focus better and get your wiggles out!
- ✓ **Middle Schoolers:** Staying active can boost your memory and help manage stress.
- ✓ **High Schoolers:** Physical activity supports mental health, improves sleep, and helps with academic performance.





Keeps Your Body Strong

- Only 1 in 4 youth in the U.S. gets the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity.
- Regular movement lowers the risk of things like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity.
- Your bones and muscles are growing fast—movement helps you grow strong and healthy.



Improves Your Mood

- Physical activity releases endorphins, natural chemicals that make you feel happier.
- It boosts self-esteem and helps you feel more confident.
- Being active gives you more energy and helps you feel better throughout the day.
- It even improves your quality of life — now and in the future!



Encourages Social Connections

- About 60% of youth say that being active helps them feel closer to friends.
- Team sports and group activities build leadership and communication skills you'll use for life.
- Playing on a team also teaches you how to work together, try your best, and win or lose with a good attitude.



Supports Better Sleep

- Teens who are active are more likely to get 8+ hours of sleep each night.
- Better sleep = better mood, stronger immune system, and more energy during the day.



How Much Activity Do You Need?

- Everyone from elementary to high school should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.
- That can include walking, dancing, biking, jumping rope, PE class, sports, or just running around with friends—anything that gets your heart pumping and your body moving!



Quick Facts to Remember:

- Only 24% of American youth meet daily activity guidelines.
- Being active helps you do better in school, feel better mentally, and stay healthy as you grow.
- You don't have to be an athlete—every bit of movement counts, and it all adds up!



Let's Reflect: Movement Matters

Take a moment to think about how you move your body each day. Use these questions to reflect on your own or talk about them with your family!

- ♥ What's your favorite way to move your body?
- 🏃 What's one new activity you'd like to try?
- 🏹 How do you feel after you've been active?
- 🕒 When during your day do you like to move the most — morning, after school, or before bed?
- 👫 Who do you enjoy being active with? Can you invite someone to join you?
- 🧠 Can you think of a time when being active helped you feel more focused or less stressed?
- 🏠 What are some ways your family already moves together?
- 🎯 What's one small goal you could set this week to be more active?


Movement Challenge of the Week

Pick one way to move your body **every day this week** —
it can be anything that gets your heart pumping and puts a smile on your face!

Challenge a friend or family member to join you, and keep track of your progress.

Remember: Every move counts, and small steps add up to big wins for your health!





Move Every Day in May

Youth Activity Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				May 1 Make up your own dance and teach it to someone	May 2 Go for a walk or jog and count how many birds you see	May 3 Challenge someone to a push-up or plank contest
May 4 Play a sport you love (basketball, soccer, etc.)	May 5 Have a solo dance party for 10 minutes	May 6 Jump rope for 5 minutes (or practice cool tricks)	May 7 Take a nature walk and collect cool rocks or leaves	May 8 Do 3 rounds of: 10 jumping jacks, 10 squats, 10 lunges	May 9 Walk a dog or pretend you're on a dog-walking mission	May 10 Ride your bike, scooter, or skateboard
May 11 Build your own obstacle course indoors or outside	May 12 Try 5 yoga poses or gentle stretches	May 13 Play tag, hide-and-seek, or another classic game	May 14 Do 10 burpees—then try to beat your time tomorrow!	May 15 Walk around the block and count how many steps it takes	May 16 Do 10 jumping jacks every hour you're awake	May 17 Play a made-up game using only a ball and your imagination
May 18 Toss a ball with someone or bounce it off a wall	May 19 Do 20 frog jumps and 10 bear crawls	May 20 Create your own fitness circuit (4-5 exercises in a row)	May 21 Try a 1-minute wall sit—how long can you hold it?	May 22 Climb something safe (stairs, a hill, monkey bars)	May 23 Race a friend or family member in your backyard or park	May 24 Do 10 toe touches, 10 arm circles, and 10 high knees
May 25 Shoot hoops, kick a soccer ball, or toss a frisbee	May 26 Create a fun physical challenge for a sibling or friend	May 27 Go on a walk and look for interesting signs or symbols	May 28 Practice a sport skill for 15 minutes	May 29 Make up your own dance routine and perform it	May 30 Create a mini workout with one move for each letter of your name	May 31 Celebrate with your favorite active game or adventure outdoors!