

Active Inside or Outside



Active play makes the best exercise since it keeps kids coming back for more! Encourage your children to stay active—whether outside or inside—with these fun activities and games. You don't need fancy equipment or a gym membership, just a little creativity.

OUTDOORS

Adventure course

Together, create a course with “hazards.” Your child might line up pebbles as a “rock slide” to hop over and scatter hula hoops as “pools” to run around. Add a red towel for a “lava river” for him to cross by jumping over with both feet. Then, take turns completing the course, and time each person. Who can get through the fastest? Or make it a follow-the-leader game, and take turns being the leader.



Dress-up relay

Let your youngster gather two coats, two hats, two scarves, and two pairs of gloves. Put each set of clothing into a bag, and place the bags on separate chairs at one end of a yard. Have players divide into two lines and stand 15 yards away from a chair. The first person on each team races to the chair and puts on the coat, hat, scarf, and gloves. Then she races back and takes off the items. The next person puts them on, runs to the chair, removes them, puts them back in the bag, and runs back to tag the next player. Keep going until one team finishes—and wins.

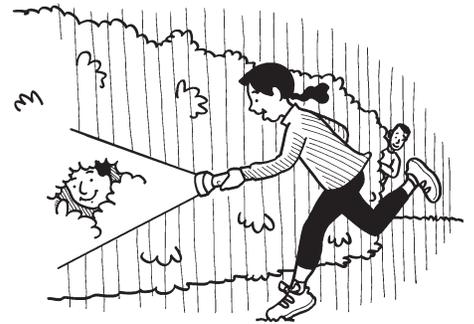
Straddle ball

This game is good for a group. Stand in a circle, facing each other with feet wide apart and each foot touching the foot of

the person next to you. One person rolls a playground ball, aiming to get it through another person's legs before that player can stop it with his hands. *Note:* Players have to keep their hands on their knees unless a ball is rolled toward them. If the player stops it, he gets a point and rolls it again. If he doesn't, he retrieves the ball and then rolls it (no point scored). The first one to get 10 points is the winner.

Flashlight hide-and-seek

Grab a flashlight for this fun nighttime game. Give the flashlight to one person (“It”), who has to find and tag the other players by shining the flashlight on them. Players get a 30-second head start to hide, and then It goes searching for them. The last one found becomes It for the next game. *Variation:* When It tags a player, she hands the flashlight over, and that person becomes It. Keep transferring the flashlight until everyone has been found.



Water balloon toss

Fill a few water balloons, and plan on getting wet! Form two-person teams, and give each team a towel to stretch between them (holding it by the corners). Have the teams stand a few feet apart and bounce a water balloon from one towel to another—without popping the balloon. With each toss, take a step away from each other. Play until the balloon pops, and then begin again with a new one.

continued

INDOORS



Stuffed animal dance

For this game, you'll need one stuffed animal per player. Put the stuffed animals in a pile in the middle of the room. Name one person the "zookeeper." Have her turn on music, and everyone else dances, jumps, and hops around to the beat. As they're dancing, the zookeeper removes one stuffed animal from the pile and then stops the music. The players have to grab a stuffed animal from the pile, and the person who doesn't get one is out. Keep playing, removing one stuffed animal on each round. The last one with an animal gets to be the next zookeeper.

Workout tower

Help your child cover 10–12 empty cereal, tissue, or other boxes with plain paper. On each box, he should write an exercise ("jumping jacks," "sit-ups"). To play, take turns adding a box to build a tower. Each time, all the players do the exercise written on the box. The number of times they do it depends on the block's position in the tower. For example, if a player adds the fifth box ("Bounce a ball"), each person bounces a ball five times. Then, they repeat the activities from the rest of the tower (four jumping jacks, three sit-ups, and so on). When the tower topples, start the fun again.



Editor's Note: Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

Sock basketball

You don't need a hoop or even a basketball for this game—just socks and two laundry baskets! Make the socks into balls by folding one sock into another. Then, place the laundry baskets on opposite sides of a room, and divide the room in half by laying down a jump rope. Each player has one side of the room (if you have more players, form teams). The object of the game is to get the most sock balls into the opposing player's basket. You can try to block the other player's shots, but you can't cross the line. When all the balls are tossed, count the ones in each basket. Whoever landed the most shots wins.

Bug races

Tap into your youngster's imagination with this clever race. Use an open space in a basement, hallway, or family room. Decide on three "bugs" and their moves. For example, beetles could crawl on hands and knees, caterpillars might scoot on their tummies, and grasshoppers would crouch and jump forward. Race three times, with all players being the same bug. Which bug is the fastest? The silliest?



Broom hockey

This two-player game calls for two brooms, a small rubber or plastic ball, and two empty cartons. At opposite ends of a room, place the boxes on their sides (open end facing in)—they'll be the goals. Give each player a broom, place the ball in the middle of the room, and start with a face-off. The players stand opposite each other, count to three, and use their brooms to try to control the ball. Then, each person tries to score points by getting the ball into her goal. After a goal is scored, begin again with a face-off. The first player to score five points wins.

Nutrition Nuggets™

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated ■ 128 N. Royal Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630 ■ 540-636-4280

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