

Give your family the gift of regular exercise

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(HealthDay)—Physical activity could be the best gift to give your family this holiday season. And the American Heart Association (AHA) has some suggestions on how to do that.

Find open times for physical [activity](#) and make it a regular part of your family's schedule. Include it on a weekly calendar for the whole family.

Experts say children should be limited to one to two hours of TV/computer/video games a day. But the average 8-year-old spends eight hours a day using various types of media, and it's often more than 11 hours for teenagers.

The coronavirus pandemic has upended organized sports for many kids, with many becoming even more sedentary.

Provide youngsters with age-appropriate physically active alternatives to TV or video games after school, the AHA advises.

Here are some other suggestions:

- Limit children's TV, computer, smartphone and video game time. Don't make the TV

the main focus of a room.

- Don't let kids have televisions or [video game](#) devices in their bedrooms, and don't use TV time as a reward or punishment.
- Plan TV watching in advance. Select the shows you want to watch, and turn the TV on for only those shows and turn it off when they're over. Don't just watch whatever comes on next.
- Set a good example. Your children won't accept being restricted to two hours of gaming if you have unlimited screen time. Being a good role model is the best way to influence your [children's](#) behavior.
- Be active with your kids. Develop a set of activities the family can do regardless of weather.
- Start a family [game](#) night; get out to shoot hoops or kick a [soccer ball](#), or walk the dog. You can also explore a nearby park, turn on some music and dance, or do chores that require some [physical activity](#).

More information: The American Heart Association has more on [getting kids to be more active](#).

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