

Getting the family active without blowing the budget!

Being active is essential for so many reasons in addition to preventing and managing diabetes; activity is vital for our general health and wellbeing. One of the most common complaints I hear from clients is that it gets expensive to exercise and it's simply too hard to fit in activity around family commitments.

The first step is to broaden our idea of activity and think beyond the traditional forms of exercise such as the gym. There are never ending ways we can be active, you just have to use your imagination!

Exercising at home or outdoors is a great option for people with **low budgets** and has **great benefits** including:

- you can do it anytime
- you can wear whatever you like
- there is no travel time, parking issues, lockers that don't work or people that won't share equipment or wear deodorant!
- you'll like the shower and the music – they are yours!
- after initial outlay for equipment there are minimal ongoing costs
- a beautiful view is inspiring and you can change the view by going to a different location!
- it's social! You'll see all sorts of people out and about and exercising

However, no plan is fool proof. There are some **pitfalls with exercising at home** or outdoors such as:

- Home equipment is so convenient that we keep putting it off; many home treadmills are used as a clothes rack.
- Other things take priority like cleaning the kitchen, the toilet, the oven; looking after the kids; or a very important show on TV!
- Not enough space for the equipment and it's a pain to get it out and put it away each time.
- The weather stops you going – wind, rain or simply too hot or too cold.
- Too many other people on the walking/cycling track you like to use at the time you like to go.

Here are the **2 most common mistakes** made when exercising at home or outdoors:

- Anything is expensive if you never take it out of the box – so try before you buy. If you are looking to buy some larger equipment for home – see if you can hire it first and see if you really like it. It might be great in the shop but boring after a few weeks/months.
- Not being prepared for the weather. A good windbreaker, fleece vest and long pants can really make walking in inclement weather quite comfortable. By the same token, exercising at the coolest time of the day avoids getting too hot or sun burnt in summer. Remember to check the forecast and dress for the occasion.

Top home exercise ideas:

1. Create your own class! Exercise DVD's can be great, as you have music as a motivator and simply follow their instruction. You don't have to worry about getting a car park or what you wear or whether you get the moves right – no one is watching! And you can do it whenever suits you! There is an endless variety so you are sure not to get bored. They range from \$10 - \$30.
2. Use gravity to your advantage! Resistance training has many benefits for weight loss, general health and prevention of so many chronic diseases. Setting up a program at home only takes a short time and minimal equipment. You can use your body weight or buy a resistive cord for as little as \$10.
3. Use Dumbbells or Resistive cords at home while watching TV. Low cost and they can live under the couch! If you are not sure about how or what exercise to do you can see an AEP for a specific exercise program for home – just few appointments to set you up and review every 3-6 months to ensure you aren't getting bored or not progressing.
4. Use your kids or grandkids as equipment – if they are small they can make a good resistance!
5. Play music that has a good steady beat and do step ups or steps on the spot.
6. If the weather is bad outside do laps of your hall way or sets of your stairs– not great scenery but you won't get rained on.
7. Dance and clean at the same time! You get the housework and exercise done all in one go.

Top outdoor exercise ideas:

1. Hit the streets! Try walking with friends or the family; to pick up the kids from school; to post a letter; or get some of the minor groceries – even if it is only part of the way. The streets don't charge no matter how many times you use them. Use some interval training and you can end up with a pretty challenging workout. Using a pedometer to count your steps for motivation (prices start as low as \$20).
2. Back to the beach! Summer is here and the warmer weather too. Many beaches have ocean pools – they are free and have a fantastic view without all the chlorine. There's nothing like the sun, sea and salt to make you feel alive!
3. Join a club! There are literally thousands of clubs across every major metropolitan and outer region, in almost any sport/activity you can think of. Squash, hockey, swimming, tennis, cycling and many more! Costs are generally low as it's in a group. They can give you greater motivation as you work with others towards healthy goals and hopefully win some games!
4. Play a game – especially if you have kids. Frisbee or catch – even modify sports like soccer, rugby, and basketball to have you all running around! Backyard cricket is always a favourite.
5. Get all the family members involved – if you have a dog consider a walk to the dog park every evening or get up in the mornings for a 30-minute walk. Rates of diabetes in dogs are increasing because their owners won't walk them.
6. User pays! Try buying a 10 or 20 visit pass rather than a time-based membership at a pool or gym. This means you only pay for what you use, particularly if you travel a lot. Just check how long they are valid for (usually 12 months). They can make a great present too!

Whatever method you choose make sure you know how you prefer to exercise. Buying any equipment that doesn't get used is expensive. If you don't use it, don't blame yourself. Look at why and make a better choice about your exercise option next time. If you can, sell it and use the money on something else towards improving your health.