



Learn my health and fitness trade secrets at [www.vitalsignsfitness.com](http://www.vitalsignsfitness.com)

**Volume I, Issue 15**  
**Tuesday, 12:30 PM**

## ***Inside This Issue...***

**Family Fitness Summer Special...Page 1**

**A Few Basic Tips on Healthy Eating...Page 2**

**Exercises for Infants ... Page 2**

**Exercises for Infants ...Page 3**

**Pre & Teen Fitness ...Page 4**

Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire. - William Yeats

Get Free health and fitness tips at my web site:  
[www.VitalSignsFitness.com](http://www.VitalSignsFitness.com)

## ***DEB CARUANA's...***

# **Vital SignsFitness!**

***"Insider Tips For Healthy, Wealthy & Fun Living..."***

## **Family Fitness Summer Special**

Social changes over the last 50 years have had a huge impact on the American family. The effect of these new living patterns and family arrangements has been to reduce the amount of exercise most people get. The following statistics provide a health and fitness profile of the American family.

Children:

- 50% do not get enough exercise to develop healthy heart and lung systems
- 98% have at least 1 heart disease risk factor
- 13% have at least 5 or more risk factors
- 20% to 30% are obese
- 75% eat too much dietary fat

Adults:

- 64% do not get enough exercise to maintain healthy heart and lung systems
  - 24% never exercise
  - 35% are overweight
  - 30% smoke cigarettes
- Studies show that parents participate with their children in strenuous physical activity an average of once per week. Families can improve their health and fitness by taking the following steps.
- Parents should act as good role models when it comes to health habits.
  - Parents and children should talk about the importance of exercise.
  - Parents should help children realize that exercise can help them meet life goals such as happiness, popularity, and longevity.
  - Parents should teach children to take time to exercise.
  - Families should participate in exercise activities together. This might include taking a walk or cycling.
  - Parents should set examples of how to incorporate exercise into everyday life. An example would be taking the stairs rather than the elevator.
  - Families should find ways to make reaching fitness goals fun. For example, miles walked can be plotted on a map. Family celebrations can be held when major milestones are reached.
  - Families should keep in mind that exercising together contributes to better family relations as well as better health.
  - Parents should limit their children's television watching as well as their own. In addition to reducing physical activity, TV watching adds to obesity. People tend to snack on fatty foods when they watch TV. A study of teenage girls showed a 2% increase in obesity for every hour of TV watched.

## **A Few Basic Tips on Healthy Eating**

Daily physical activity is only one part of the equation for optimal health and well-being for both you and your children. It must be coupled with healthful eating. This important food-fitness connection is what it's all about. By adopting an active lifestyle and choosing to eat healthful foods, you encourage children to follow your good example.

The first step toward helping your child eat a healthier diet is making a variety of nutritious foods readily available for snacks and at mealtime, including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommended by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. Then your child can choose what he or she likes best.

Make family meals a priority beginning with the first meal of the day. Research shows that children who eat breakfast are better nourished than breakfast-skippers and are more likely to meet their daily need for certain essential vitamins and minerals. Eating breakfast improves alertness and helps children feel like getting up and moving. To help make breakfast a daily habit, keep an assortment of healthy foods available. Good choices include whole grain cereals, non-fat or low-fat milk, yogurt, and fruit.

**Get Free health and fitness tips at my web site:  
[www.VitalSignsFitness.com](http://www.VitalSignsFitness.com)**

Deborah Caruana RN, AAHRFP,  
NASM, ACE.  
[www.vitalsignsfitness.com](http://www.vitalsignsfitness.com)  
email  
[deb@vitalsignsfitness.com](mailto:deb@vitalsignsfitness.com)  
call 212-677-3185

## **Exercises for Infants**

### ***Kick It!***

Let your baby find out what her legs can do while she learns about cause and effect.

- Lay the baby on her back.
- Place a small pillow or a stuffed animal by the baby's feet.
- Encourage her to kick it!

Also:

- If the baby doesn't kick the object on her own, hold it just close enough to let her feel it with the bottom of her feet.
- Make sure she gets to kick with both right and left feet.
- Use language to encourage her and describe what she's doing. For example: "You're kicking the pillow!"

### ***Crossing the Midline***

Have playtime activities that help your baby's right arm or leg cross over to the left and the left arm or leg cross over to the right. This crossing over is an important step in helping your baby learn.

- Place the baby in a comfortably seated position.
- Sit or kneel in front of him and hide a favorite toy behind your back.
- Make a game of handing him the toy so he has to reach across his body to get it.

Also:

- Repeat this, encouraging the use of both left and right hands, as long as the baby stays interested!

### ***Let It Pour*** (Fig. 3)

This outdoor summer activity promotes both eye-hand coordination and coordination in general.

- Place a plastic sheet or old tablecloth on the porch, patio or grass, and seat the baby on it, along with two large plastic cups - one empty and one filled with water or sand.
- Demonstrate pouring the water or sand from one cup to the other.
- Encourage the baby to try it!

### Most Commonly Asked Questions

**Q:** I want to encourage my children to exercise. How can I get them started?

**A:** Lead by example. If you're a couch potato, they're going to be couch potatoes

**Q:** How do I keep kids interested in exercise?

**A:** Kids need 45-60 minutes of activity each day. Supervise and watch the clock and also make sure they don't get bored by varying the activities, including pogo sticks, jump rope and jumping jacks. Squat thrusts are another fun exercise to share. From a standing position, you fall face forward to your hands, with your legs stretched out in back, push up style. Then you bring your knees forward, quickly, until you're squatting with your hands still on the ground. Then you jump up, hands on hips, and do it all over again.

**Q:** Do kids burn more calories than adults? I don't want them exercising too much!

**A:** Yes, they burn more calories because their metabolisms are higher. That's why it's important for children to eat properly. They should also stay hydrated by drinking one cup of water for each half hour of activity.

**Q:** Is it important for kids to stretch before exercising?

**A:** Yes! Limber up with some toe touches, and keep it interesting by stretching with your children. Another stretch that's good for your child's quads (the muscles on the front of the thigh) is grabbing one foot while standing straight and holding the position it for a count of 10. Lean on a partner or grab a chair if you have a hard time keeping your balance. And then switch to the other foot.

### Exercises for Infants

#### *Heads, Bellies, Toes*

This game helps with identifying body parts, flexibility, and understanding the concepts of up, down, low, and high.

- Stand facing your child.
- Beginning slowly, call out the names of the three body parts that are in the title, asking your child to touch each part as he hears its name.
- Once your child is successful at this, reverse - and mix up - the order of body parts.

Also:

- Change the tempo at which you call out the body parts - sometimes slow and sometimes fast.
- Another possibility is to start out slowly and gradually get faster.
- When your child is ready, play *Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*. Later, you can once again change the order of body parts and the pace at which you call them out.

#### *Let's Tiptoe*

Walking on tiptoe uses the child's own body weight to develop strength. It also helps with balance!

- Show your child how to tiptoe.
- Ask her to do it with you.
- Tiptoe as long as your toddler stays interested.

Also:

- Play a piece of quiet music as you both tiptoe.
- Use imagery - for example, asking your child to pretend she's sneaking up on someone, or a kitty cat trying to catch a bird.
- Vary pathways (straight, curving, and zigzagging) and directions (forward, backward, and sideward).

**Q:** Are trampolines a good way for kids to get exercise?

**A:** No way! The American Academy of Pediatrics says to stay away from trampolines because they're dangerous. For an exercise that's just as good for burning calories, sit facing your child on the floor with knees bent. Then pass a soccer ball around (or a medicine ball if your kids are stronger), leaning back when you catch it and leaning forward to throw it.

## Family Fitness Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics:  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- American Heart Association:  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa)
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans:  
[www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines)
- Eat Smart. Play Hard:  
[www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/home2.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/home2.html)
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada:  
[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)
- Healthfinder:  
[www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)
- HealthierUS and Steps to a HealthierUS:  
[www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov)  
[www.healthierus.gov/steps](http://www.healthierus.gov/steps)
- Healthy People 2010:  
[www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov)
- Moving & Learning:  
[www.movingandlearning.com](http://www.movingandlearning.com)
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education:  
[www.aahperd.org/naspe](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe)
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports:  
[www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)  
[www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org)

## Exercises for Preschoolers

### *Beanbag Balance*

When it comes to balancing activities, this is an all-time favorite for children.

- Place a beanbag or a small, soft toy on your child's head.
- Invite her to walk from one point in the room to another without dropping the beanbag.
- If she has to, she can hold on to it at first.

Also:

- Ask her to balance the beanbag as she walks both slowly and quickly, in different directions (forward, backward, or sideward), and in different pathways (straight, curving, and zigzagging).
- Invite her to try balancing the beanbag on other body parts, like a hand, shoulder, or elbow.

### *Jump the River*

Jumping uses the child's own weight to build strength. If you do this for long periods of time, it can be good for the heart.

- Lay a jump rope in a straight line on the floor - or draw a line on the ground with chalk.
- Ask your child to pretend the line is a river.
- Challenge him to jump from one side of the river to the other.

Also:

- Be sure your child is landing with knees bent and heels coming all the way down to the floor.
- When he's ready, you can "widen the river" by using two ropes, side by side, or a towel.

## Pre & Teen Fitness

Often, the hardest part of getting into shape is taking the first step. Here are some simple steps to help you begin your journey.

### **Think F.I.T.**

To make physical improvements, you need to work your body harder than usual. This is referred to as the overload principle. As your body becomes more conditioned, you need to increase the frequency, intensity, or time of your workouts in order to continue improving your fitness level.

### **Teens Need More Exercise**

The medical community has been sounding the alarm: America's kids are in worse physical shape than they were 20 years ago. This is particularly appalling since overweight teens often grow into overweight adults, and overweight adults develop more heart disease, diabetes, gout, and arthritis. The New England Journal of Medicine reported that obese teenagers in the top 25 percent of their weight categories have twice the death rate in their 70s as men and women who were thin as teens.

Every time our teens sprawl in front of the TV, their metabolism slows to a crawl. Researchers at Memphis State University and the University of Tennessee explored the link several years ago and were startled to find that kids' metabolisms were lower while they were watching television than when they were resting and doing nothing at all! The typical teen now spends almost 30 hours a week in front of the tube, while eating high-fat snacks.

Meanwhile, budget-stressed schools are cutting back the number of physical education classes offered. Illinois is the only state that requires daily PE classes, and even hundreds of its schools manage to find loopholes to skip gym.

So if the schools aren't setting an example, who's going to step in and prod teens off those cushy couches? That's right: It's up to us, as parents, to help them find ways of living a healthy lifestyle. But where do we start?

**Get Free health and fitness tips at my web site:**  
**[www.VitalSignsFitness.com](http://www.VitalSignsFitness.com)**

**Frequency:** How often you exercise. For beginners, consider starting with 2-3 sessions per week.

**Intensity:** How hard you exercise. For example, the pace you walk or run, the amount of weight you lift, or your heart rate count.

**Time:** How long you perform an activity. "Time" can also refer to the number of sets or repetitions you perform in weight training.

### **Exercise Component 1: Aerobic Exercise**

Aerobic exercise increases the health and function of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. For maximum effectiveness, aerobic exercise needs to be rhythmic, continuous and involve the large muscle groups (primarily located in the lower part of your body.) Walking, jogging, cycling, aerobic dance, and stair climbing are examples of activities that use large muscle groups. Activities combining upper and lower body movements such as cross-country skiing, rowing, and swimming can lead to even higher levels of aerobic capacity.

### **Exercise Component 2: Strength Training**

Strength training is the process of exercising with progressively heavier resistance to build or retain muscle. Unless you perform regular strength exercise, you will lose up to one-half pound of muscle every year of life after age 25. Muscle is a very active tissue with high energy requirements, even when you are asleep, your muscles are responsible for over 25% of your calorie use. An increase in muscle tissue causes a corresponding increase in the number of calories your body will burn, even at rest.

### **Exercise Component 3: Flexibility**

Flexibility is a critical element of an exercise program but it is often overlooked. Stretching is important for a number of reasons; increases physical performance, decreases risk of injury, increases blood supply and nutrients to the joints, increases neuromuscular coordination, reduces soreness, improves balance, decreases risk of low back pain, and reduces stress in muscles.

### **Choosing an Exercise**

The best exercise is an activity that you enjoy enough to really pursue enthusiastically. Experiment with different forms of activity. Alternating new activities with old favorites will keep your enthusiasm high. Cross training also helps avoid injury.

**Schedule Your Workouts:** Exercise must be a priority in order to establish it as a lifestyle practice. Make time for your workouts and schedule them on your daily calendar or planner.

**Dress the Part:** Wear comfortable clothes appropriate for exercising, they will help you feel like working out. If you exercise at a gym put your exercise wear in a bag and set it beside the door the night before. When it's time to head out the door, all you have to do is grab your bag on the way out.

## **I'd Love To Hear From YOU!**

Whether your goal is to lose weight, get in the best shape of your life, perform even better in all your sports or anything in between, I can help you.

I'd love to hear from you – even if you just want to say “Hi!”

I'm full of energy, and people tell me – a pretty fun person to talk to. So please don't hesitate to call me up with any questions you have about health and fitness related issues. There's never any pressure and no obligation. I'm a resource...and a friend!  
Deborah Caruana RN, AAHRFP,  
NASM, ACE.  
Vital Signs Fitness.com  
311 E 11 St #6  
NY NY 10003  
CALL 212-677-3185  
CELL 917-826-9083  
EMAIL [deb@vitalsignsfitness.com](mailto:deb@vitalsignsfitness.com)

Copyright © 2001 Vital Signs  
Fitness

Deborah Caruana RN, AAHRFP,  
NASM, ACE.  
[www.vitalsignsfitness.com](http://www.vitalsignsfitness.com)  
email [deb@vitalsignsfitness.com](mailto:deb@vitalsignsfitness.com)  
call 212-677-3185

## **Top Ten Arguments FOR Exercising**

Teens are great at coming up with reasons not to exercise, so be ready to give them incentives to get fit. Here are 10 pro-exercise arguments to present to your teen:

**10.** Running and walking are convenient. All you have to do is walk out the door and put one foot in front of the other. No need for pools, courts, or fields.

**9.** Running doesn't cost much. Splurge on good running shoes, but go the el-cheapo route for shorts, t-shirts, and sweats.

**8.** Your heart becomes more efficient at pumping blood and oxygen through your body every time you exercise aerobically. You'll think more clearly, get better SAT scores and maybe even ace that chemistry exam. You'll also raise HDL levels (high density lipoprotein) in your arteries to protect you from heart attacks and strokes when you get really old -- like in your 40s and 50s!

**7.** It's an awesome time to chat with friends. (And talking slows your pace, so you'll exercise longer.)

**6.** It's a perfect time to be alone and think. You'll be blown away by the creative thoughts -- ideas for school papers, ways to end that fight with your best friend, and what to say to that cute kid in English class.

**5.** The benefits of cross-training extend to all sports you do. Aerobic exercise conditions your body to perform longer, faster, and more efficiently. Wait until your coach sees you play soccer or baseball!

**4.** The more exercise you do, the more energy you'll have for hours afterwards. Your body will kick into overdrive after a few weeks of conditioning and you will feel more energized than you ever have before.

**3.** It makes you feel great physically. The progress is truly dramatic! Every time you work out, your muscles develop strength and power. Your lungs hold mega amounts of oxygen. You'll find that you're staring at yourself in full-length mirrors because you look AWESOME! Forget about dieting: Your metabolism will burn extra fat for hours afterwards.

**2.** It makes you feel good mentally. Not everyone has the discipline and ability to set a goal and reach it with slow, steady and hard work.

**1.** Aerobic exercise, especially running, can demolish feelings of depression and frustration. After 20 or more minutes of continuous slow running, your body releases powerful hormones called endorphins that start pumping through your bloodstream, producing a strong "runner's high" that does wonders for your self-esteem.