

STAYING FIT THIS SUMMER...

EVERYONE CAN DO IT

by Travis Broome and Mari W. Broome, MSW, LCSW

ONE OF MY WORST FEARS AS A PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER IS THAT MY STUDENTS WILL SPEND MOST OF THEIR SUMMER IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION.

I'm all about playing video games, watching movies, or getting into a good television show, but physical fitness plays a huge role in our overall well-being. Exercise is an easy way to make our minds and bodies feel better. It helps with the following:

- **DIGESTION**
- **RESTFUL SLEEP**
- **RELEASING ENDORPHINS (FEEL GOOD RECEPTORS) IN OUR BODIES**
- **STAVING OFF ILLNESS**

It also promotes a healthier diet, which promotes healthy brain function, helping you to have more clarity and motivation.

"ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN ALSO LEAD TO HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM AND MAY LEAD TO DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS."

Engaging in physical activity can also lead to higher self-esteem and may lead to developing friendships. Some of my best friends are the ones I met playing youth sports or in summer camp.

There are many resources that discuss the amount of time a child/adolescent should spend engaged in physical activity. These resources also discuss the various levels of activity one should partake in (moderate or vigorous). An easy rule of thumb, try your best to be physically active for at least one hour per day. So what can you do to make sure you are physically active for at least one hour per day? That's the easy part!



ACTIVITIES FOR SUMMER

One of the best ways to remain physically active over the summer is to participate in some form of summer camp.

Summer camps provide young people, like you, with all sorts of opportunities to remain active. I personally remember going to a teen camp for two summers; it is one of my best memories of being a teenager. You can find out about summer camps offered in your area by visiting a local recreation center, city hall, or even your school.

APPROXIMATELY 89 PERCENT OF CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN FOUR AND FIVE YEARS SPEND MORE THAN TWO HOURS WATCHING TV, VIDEOS OR DVDS EVERY DAY.

Now, summer camp isn't a possibility for everyone, but that doesn't mean you can't remain active. There are so many things you can do that are right at your fingertips. Here is a list of some activities you may want to engage in this summer:



- **SWIMMING IS ONE OF THE BEST FORMS OF EXERCISE.** If you love to swim but don't have a pool, visit a friend's house or try and go to a local public pool. Public pools are inexpensive and usually have many fun things to play on, such as diving boards and waterslides. Remember, ALWAYS make sure a lifeguard is present at all times!
- **ANY FORM OF THE GAME "TAG" IS A GREAT WAY TO EXERCISE.** My next door neighbors play tag for hours. They have a great time playing, and they don't even realize they're exercising.
- **LIKE GOING TO THE MALL?** Before shopping, walk around the mall for 20-30 minutes. If you are moving constantly for an extended period of time, you're exercising!
- **TAKE A DECK OF CARDS AND PULL OUT THE JACKS, QUEENS AND KINGS.** Shuffle the cards you pulled out and draw a card from the deck. If you pull a Jack, do 10 jumping jacks. If you pull a Queen, do 10 push-ups. If you pull a King, do 10 sit-ups. You can create any exercise for any card. For an extra workout, take the cards with you on a walk and pull a card every 2-3 minutes.
- **CHECK OUT YOUTUBE FOR EXERCISE VIDEOS.** There are great videos for stretching, aerobics, yoga, and more. The best thing about these videos is that many range from five minutes to more than an hour, so you can find something that best fits your needs.
- **JUMPING ROPE IS A GREAT CARDIOVASCULAR EXERCISE.** You can create games such as seeing how many times you can jump without stopping or timing how long you can jump. Taking a jump rope on a walk is also a good idea. Just like the deck of cards, jump rope 10 times every two to three minutes during your walk.
- **HAVE YOUR FRIENDS WRITE DOWN GAMES ON PIECES OF PAPER.** This game is similar to the deck of cards. Crumble up the pieces of paper and put them in a hat. Have one of your friends draw a piece of paper, then play that activity. This is fun because you never know what you're going to do. Maybe you'll ride bikes or maybe you'll shoot basketball. Be creative when thinking of activities.
- **WALKING AND BIKE RIDING CAN NOT ONLY BE FUN, BUT BENEFICIAL.** Go riding with friends or find a cool nature trail to walk.



Okay, I'm going to say something that may make your parents cringe. Playing video games can be good for you. If you like video games, try to mix in games that involve physical activity. Most of the new game systems have a great variety of games that expose gamers to many forms of physical fitness. These games may include aerobics, dancing, boxing, bowling, tennis and many other activities. Now, one shouldn't always use video games as their form of physical activity, but it can definitely be an option every once in a while.

"EXPERT LEVEL NOT REQUIRED"

You don't have to be an expert in physical activity to develop awesome games. I get a lot of great ideas for games and activities from various Web sites. When you have a free moment, check out Fuel Up to Play 60, Project Healthy Schools, and Let's Move! These Web sites are great resources if you'd like to find something enjoyable and healthy to do.

IS BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE REALLY THAT IMPORTANT? YES!

Research has shown that being sedentary can lead to unhealthy habits. Watching television, playing on our phones, etc. takes away from the time we could be active. Plus, while watching TV or engaging in other sedentary activities, we are more likely to snack on foods that are high in sugar, salt and fat. Approximately 89 percent of children aged between four and five years spend more than two hours watching TV, videos or DVDs every day. These habits that are set in childhood can follow us into adulthood.

If we could give up just 30 minutes of that time to do something active, it would make a huge impact in our overall health. I'm not saying to completely give up on TV, but find balance between sedentary time and active time.

CONCLUSION

The advice I give my students when it comes to physical activity is this: Find something active you enjoy doing, and go do it. It's that simple. If you don't like to run, then walk or ride a bike. If it's too hot for you outside, go swimming or find an indoor activity. Physical activity should be fun; get creative when developing your own ideas. If you'd like to discuss some ideas for you and your friends, email me at travisbroome@hotmail.com, and I'll be more than happy to work with you in creating some fun activities. Enjoy your summer, and while you enjoy the time away from school, make sure you stay active.

About the Authors:

Travis Broome is an Elementary School Physical Education teacher. He holds a bachelor's degree in family and child sciences, a master's degree in adapted physical activity, and a specialist's degree in educational leadership. He attended both the University of Florida and Florida State University.

Mari Broome, MSW, LCSW, is a psychotherapist providing counseling to children, adolescents and adults. She specializes in the areas of body image, eating disorders/obesity, and overall health and wellness. She graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in exercise and sports sciences: fitness/wellness prior to obtaining her license so that she could provide a more holistic approach to treatment. She is also an Integrative Yoga therapy teacher and children's Yoga teacher and incorporates these practices within her practice.

Membership Application

OAC Membership Categories

(select one)

- Individual Membership: \$20/year
- Institutional Membership: \$500/year
- Chairman's Council Membership: \$1,000+/year

OAC Membership Add-ons

(optional, but only accessible by OAC members)

Add-on 1: Educational Resources

To order bulk copies of OAC resources, members can purchase educational packages. If you'd like to order resources, select one of the below packages.

- Standard Package**
10-50 pieces/quarter \$50/year
- Deluxe Package**
51-100 pieces/quarter \$100/year
- Premium Package**
101-250 pieces/quarter \$150/year

Add-on 2: Make a General Donation

Make a tax-deductible donation to the OAC when joining as a member. Your donation helps the OAC's educational and advocacy efforts.

- \$5
- \$10
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- \$50
- \$100
- Other _____

Membership/Add-on Totals:

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MEMBERSHIP



Building a Coalition of those Affected

The OAC is the **ONLY** non-profit organization whose sole focus is helping those affected by obesity. The OAC is a great place to turn if you are looking for a way to get involved and give back to the cause of obesity.

There are a variety of ways that you can make a difference, but the first-step is to become an OAC Member. The great thing about OAC membership is that you can be as involved as you would like. Simply being a member contributes to the cause of obesity.

Why YOU Should Become an OAC Member

Quite simply, because the voice of those affected needs to be built! The OAC not only provides valuable public education on obesity, but we also conduct a variety of advocacy efforts. With advocacy, our voice must be strong. And, membership is what gives the OAC its strong voice.

Membership Benefits

Benefits to Individual Membership

- Official welcome letter and membership card
- Annual subscription to the OAC's publication, *Your Weight Matters Magazine*
- Subscriptions to the *OAC Members Make a Difference* and *Obesity Action Alert* monthly e-newsletters
- "Bias Buster" Alerts, alerting specifically to issues of weight bias
- Immediate Advocacy Alerts on urgent advocacy issues and access to the OAC's expert advocacy team
- Ability to lend your voice to the cause

