

# Get Kids Into the “Swing” of Things

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For all of you parents out there, would you like your children to become active healthy adults? Now is the time to instill good habits and encourage activity so it is carried on throughout adulthood. Today’s children are more sedentary and overweight than ever. More likely than not, this trend will continue into adulthood potentially resulting in multiple health problems including cardiovascular and musculoskeletal disorders. The solution may be simpler than you think.

Engage your kids in old fashioned outdoor play. Why get into the “swing” of things? Swinging requires more physical endurance and strength than you might think, and it is a fun way to get your child to exercise and they don’t even know they are doing it! Swinging (when the child is pumping on their own, not being pushed) challenges the hamstrings and quadriceps in the legs, the abdominal muscles, and the biceps and triceps in the arms. It will challenge the child’s endurance yet is mild enough to use as a beginning activity for a child who is physically out of shape.

The entire playground is a great place to get a physical workout. Monkey bars improve grip strength, shoulder stability, and flexibility. The teeter totter is excellent for developing strength in all the muscles from the toes to the lower back and abs as it simulates jumping. Even slides are a great form of exercise because in order to go down the slide you must climb up! So turn off the TV this summer and get to the park. If frequent visits to the park are not feasible, kicking a ball, hanging on the clothesline poles, biking, and playing catch are great summer activities, too, that will help direct your child down the healthy path of life!