

# IT'S TIME TO PLAY!



Maybe you're looking outside right now and snow is falling on the ground, or maybe you're in a place where people are sweating and wearing shorts. You might have a bunch of friends available for playing, or you could be all by yourself! No matter what the weather is like or how many friends are around, there's always a way to be physically active and to have fun. Here's how!

## When It's Just You

Try hopping on your bike, strapping on your skates, or grabbing your skateboard. Don't forget your helmet and pads! Or try jumping rope and counting how many times you can jump before you miss. Jumping rope is a great way to get aerobic exercise!

Sometimes being by yourself gives you a chance to practice stuff so you get better at it. If you play soccer, try kicking the ball against a brick wall. If basketball's your thing, try shooting hoops and seeing how many you can sink. When you play with your friends again, they'll be amazed at what you can do!

### More things to do when it's just you:

- Practice hopscotch.
- See how long you can hop on one foot.
- Do jumping jacks.
- Invent some dance moves.
- Do sprints (short running races) and time yourself to see how fast you go.
- Use a pedometer to count the number of steps between your favorite places, like your house and the park.

## When There Are Two

Just you and a friend looking for something to do? How about a little one-on-one in basketball or a race to see who's the fastest runner? Maybe you're into cheerleading. If so, invent some new cheers together.

### More things to do when there are two:

- Have a handstand contest.
- Invent dances to your favorite songs.
- Jump rope together.
- Ride bikes and don't forget your helmets!

## When There Are a Lot of You

If there are a bunch of kids looking for something cool to do, you're in luck! Lots of sports and games work well with a group of kids. Baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer are good group games. Or you might play follow the leader on bikes, roller blades, or skates. How about some good old fashion games of capture the flag, kick the can, tag, or red-light, green-light! If you don't know how to play, ask your folks!

### **More things to do when there are a lot of you:**

- Have a skateboarding contest.
- Play tag.
- Play outdoor hide-and-seek.
- Dance to your favorite music.
- Walk or ride bikes as a group

## When It's Cold Outside

Brrr! It's a cold day and you're all bundled up, looking for some fun. Warm up fast and get those muscles moving by helping your parents shovel the snow off the driveway or the sidewalk. Make some giant snow people or other snow creatures. Build an igloo or a fort, and store all your snowballs there. Or see the snow rushing past you from a sled, snowboard, or toboggan. It helps to have a grown-up around to keep everyone safe. Be sure to steer clear of obstacles like trees and to stay off roads and streets!

No snow? Bundle up and take a walk outside to breath that crisp cold air. Have a scavenger hunt for acorns, sticks and leaves; or search for signs of spring like birds or tree buds!

### **More things to do when it's cold:**

- Play tag in the snow.
- Take a nature hike and look for animal footprints.
- Bring the games inside by creating new dance moves or making forts with sheets and pillows.

## When It's Hot, Hot, Hot!

Yikes - it's hot outside, everyone is sweaty, and your legs are stuck to the seat of the car. What do you do? Swim, of course! Race your friends or show off your underwater skills by blowing bubbles or doing a handstand. But don't forget the safety rules. Make sure there's an adult around to watch you, and no dunking!

On land, you can have a water balloon toss with friends. Catch that balloon, or you'll get soaked! Take to the shade and enjoy a hike with friends and family in the woods. Try to point out different kinds of birds and animals! Can you move your body like the animals you see?

When you're exercising in the heat, it is very important to remember to **drink lots of water**, even if you don't feel thirsty. Hot temperatures make you sweat more when you're exercising, so you must replace the water you lose to prevent heat exhaustion.

### **More things to do when it's hot:**

- Help wash your dog outside.
- Help wash your parents' or neighbors' car.
- Turn on the sprinkler and cool off!

## **When You're Stuck at Home**

Maybe you can't go out because the weather is rainy or too cold - but that doesn't mean you can't get some exercise while you're inside! Turn on your favorite music and dance. Invite your dog or cat to join in the fun! Grab a hula hoop and make up some hula-hoop dances. If there is enough room, you can jump rope and count how many times you jump without missing.

There are basketball hoops with over-the-door hooks and basketballs made from soft foam that are meant to be played with indoors. If you have them and there is enough room, set them up and shoot some hoops. Have a tournament with everyone in the house - may the best basketball player win!

### **More things to do when you're stuck at home:**

- Do some tumbling if you have enough room to do it.
- Set up a scavenger hunt.
- Bat a balloon back and forth and try not to let it hit the floor.

And here's one thing **not** to do: Try not to say, "I'm bored. There's nothing to do." As you just found out, there's always something to do!

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