

Children's Mental Health Week



Nurturing Healthy Minds: Physical Well-Being

Did you know?

Physical activity can have a significant impact on your mental health and wellbeing. Getting active releases endorphins, hormones secreted in the brain which bring a sense of happiness. Exercise is a natural way to elevate your mood, relieve stress and increase your energy. Physical activity can help ease symptoms of depression¹ and anxiety.² Healthy eating habits also have a positive impact on your mental health.

LET'S GET ACTIVE!

Step Activities³ (All Ages) You don't need a gym membership to get the benefits of physical activity! See the page below for lots of ideas for the whole family to get active.

Sweat Activities⁴ (All Ages) See the page below for some ideas to get your heart rate up that are so fun, you won't even realize you are getting good physical activity in.

Sit Activities⁵ (Primary, Intermediate) Try to have no more than two hours of sit activities a day. Please see page below for some ideas to get you started!

Family At Home Workouts⁶: For daily exercises that the whole family can enjoy, free of charge at this time, please see: <https://fast.wistia.net/embed/channel/5jehdru8mr>. You just need to create an account and go!

Down Dog⁷ – Free yoga app for students and teachers until July 1st: <https://www.downdogapp.com/>

Feeling Stressed or Anxious? Try This!

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR): A technique that helps reduce tension, stress and anxiety in the body. This practice has participants tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups. This exercise can provide an immediate sense of relaxation. It is recommended that it be practiced frequently. Please see below for instructions on how to use PMR.



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Sleep

Sleep is an important part of mental health. If you have any questions or concerns about yours or your child's sleep, speak to your family doctor. Here are some activities and recommendations to help you catch the zzz's that you need:

- Practice good sleep hygiene. This means having a bedtime routine that signals to your body it is time to start winding down for bed. This could be brushing your teeth, changing into bedtime attire, turning out the lights or reading a book.
- Try to fall asleep and wake up at the same time so you do not throw off your circadian rhythm. Your circadian rhythm is like your 24 hour internal clock and when this is changed, it can make you feel out of sorts.
- Professionals recommend not using electronics (television, cell phone, etc) at least one hour before bed⁸.

Gratitude Thought of the Day

What is an aspect of your physical health that you are grateful for?

What are basic needs that you do not have to worry about meeting today?

Captivating Connections

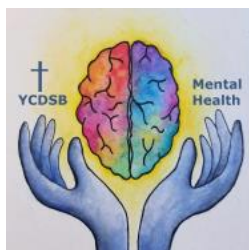
All: Write a letter or note to someone you are thinking about that you may not be able to see right now.

Children: Using chalk draw tic-tac-toe or create a Snakes and Ladders game on your driveway or sidewalk for others to play as they walk by! You can also write messages to your neighbourhood on your garage or driveway with chalk.

Looking for More Information/Ideas?

- Sleep Tips: How to help your child get a good night's sleep, by SickKids staff: <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/article?contentid=646&language=english>
- Exercise and the Brain⁹(For Teens): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=mJW7dYXPZ2o>
- www.sleepfoundation.org
- https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/dieting_information_for_teens
- www.activeforlife.com

This Mental Health Week Activity Package is brought to you by:





STEP ACTIVITIES

CANADIAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

You need several hours of light physical activity.
Look at all the things you could do!



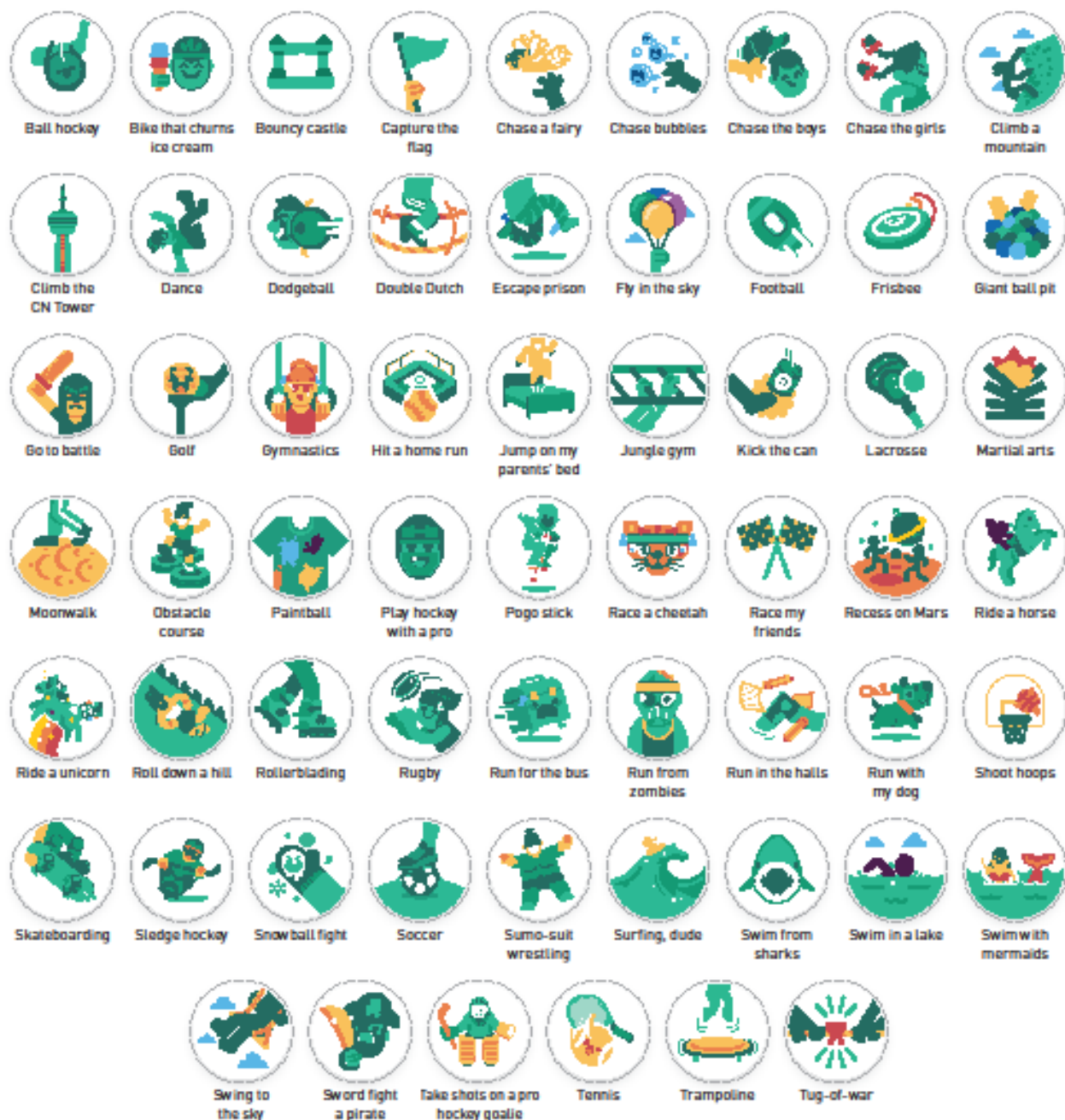
VISIT BUILDYOURBESTDAY.COM AND CREATE THE BEST DAY EVER!



SWEAT ACTIVITIES

CANADIAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

You can't have a best day without at least 60 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity. Here are some ideas to get you started!



VISIT BUILDYOURBESTDAY.COM AND CREATE THE BEST DAY EVER!



SIT ACTIVITIES

CANADIAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

No more than 2 hours of recreational screen time and limited sitting for extended periods.



Arts and crafts



Bake cookies



Building blocks



Chat with grandparents



Colouring



Cuddle puppies



Daydream



Do my hair



Eat my favourite food



Go fishing



Homework



Host a tea party



Hot air balloon ride



Jigsaw puzzle



Karaoke



Limo ride



Make funny faces



Make music



Make secret potions



Paint my nails



Paper airplanes



Pass notes



Perform magic



Pick my nose



Play board games



Play with toys



Ride a Zamboni



Staring contest



Tablet time



Take selfies



Text a friend



Unwrap presents



Virtual reality experience



Watch cartoons

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script (adapted from Therapist Aid¹⁰)

*You may wish to do each muscle group three times before moving on.

Start by getting into a comfortable seated position with both feet on the floor, or a laying down position on your back. Close your eyes if you are comfortable to do so.

Take a deep inhale in, hold for a second or two and then exhale. Take another deep breath in, hold and release.

Bring your attention to your feet. Tense your feet by curling your toes and the arch of your foot. Notice the tension. Now release the curling and notice the tension leaving.

Bring your attention to your lower legs. Tense your calves, squeezing the muscles, and notice this tension. Now release the tensed muscles and notice the relaxation of the muscle set in.

Bring your attention to your thighs. You can pretend there is a watermelon in between your knees and you have to squeeze the watermelon. Notice the tension and then release.

Bring your attention to your stomach and tense your stomach. You can do this by sucking your stomach in and flexing your abdominals. Notice the tension and then release, allowing relaxation to settle in.

Take a deep inhale, pause and then exhale.

Bring your attention to your back and tense your back by squeezing your shoulder blades together. Give a good squeeze but not so hard that it hurts. You can imagine you have angel wings and you are trying to make them touch. Now release. Notice how it feels when your body relaxes.

Bring your attention to your arms and hands. Squeeze your fists together and tense your forearms and biceps. Keep squeezing and then release. Notice the feeling of relaxation.

Move your attention up to your shoulders. Bring your shoulders up to your earlobes, squeezing the muscles and release, allowing them to drop.

Now move your attention to your face and neck. Scrunch your forehead, notice the tension and release.

Finally, tense your entire body, your legs, feet, arms, stomach, shoulders and face and release, allowing for a whole body relaxation. Sit with the relaxation.

Open your eyes when you are ready.

References

- ¹ Korczak, D., Madigan, S., and Colasanto, M (2017) Children's Physical Activity and Depression: A Meta-analysis, PEDIATRICS, Vol. 139, no. 4
- ² Sick Kids Staff (2016, July 18) The Hospital for Sick Children, <https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/article?contentid=641&language=english>
- ³ Johnson, H. and McLeod, J. (2017, May 16) Build Your Best Day! www.buildyourbestday.participaction.com
- ⁴ Johnson, H. and McLeod, J (2017, May 16) Build Your Best Day! Sweat Activities. www.buildyourbestday.participaction.com
- ⁵ Johnson, H. and McLeod, J (2017, May 16) Build Your Best Day! Sit Activities. www.buildyourbestday.participaction.com
- ⁶ The Daily 20 Program, Start2finish, <https://www.start2finishonline.org/>
- ⁷ Ormachea, C. and Simon, B. (2015) *Down Dog App*, seattleyoganews.com.
- ⁸ Sick Kids Staff (2016, July 18) Sleep Tips: How to Help Your Child get a Good Night's Sleep, www.aboutkidshealth.ca/article?contentid=646&language=english
- ⁹ Exercise and the Brain (2016, November 12) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=mJW7dYXPZ2o>
- ¹⁰ TherapistAid (2017) Progressive Muscle Relaxation, provided by: www.therapistaid.com
- ¹¹ Wheeler, James. Woman Walking in the Forest with Child [Photo]. Unsplash. <https://unsplash.com/photos/RRZM3cwS1DU>