

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BELOIT BLOG

Ashley Hoverson, Director of Gymnastics and Healthy Living
Stateline Family YMCA

February 2021 – [Why Being Active is Important for Youth](#)

[Being active is not just for the athletes](#); it is a lifestyle for everyone and crucial to learn at a young age. If you start them young, the chances of bringing that habit into their adult life are much higher.

First, let us cover [why exercise is important for youth](#). Of course, being active helps maintain a healthy weight, but that is not all. It strengthens children's bones, muscles, heart, and lungs. It improves coordination, balance, posture, and flexibility. Children are more likely to have greater confidence, better concentration, and better sleep. In addition, being active reduces the chances of getting type-2 diabetes later in life.

Second, let us talk about [how to incorporate more activity into a daily routine](#). There are so many options when it comes to being active. The first thing to do is: put down the device -- set aside the tablet, phone, video games, etc. for 30-60 minutes. A reasonable goal to start with is 150 minutes of moderate-vigorous activity each week. That could be 30 minutes 5x/week, 50 minutes 3x/week, or a little over 20 minutes each day of the week.

[Here are a few ideas to get your active time in:](#)

- Play a game: freeze tag, make a hopscotch, Simon Says, capture the flag, make an obstacle course.
- Jump Rope to your favorite song or make up a fun dance – get creative!
- Write down activities on popsicle sticks or pieces of paper and put them in a jar. Take turns picking out one and complete the activity together.
- Make an activity bingo card.
- Put on a jacket, gloves & hat & build a snowman or go sledding (There's no shortage of snow this winter!).
- Find a YouTube or fitness video to follow along to.
- Ride a bike or go for a walk/jog around the neighborhood.
- Go to the local park or for a hike.

[Another great way to increase the time spent active](#) is to get involved in a sport or leisure activity. Meeting other kids with similar interests helps motivate children to stay engaged and active. It is also fun to meet new friends and learn teamwork! Even if it's not in an organized sport or program, playing 1-on-1 with your child on the basketball court or soccer field can be fun, engaging, and help strengthen your relationship.

At a time where anxiety and stress are at all-time highs, exercise can help reduce this and can be a healthy alternative to help cope with life's daily stressors. I believe if we invest in the kids at a young age, it will pay off years down the road – not only physically but mentally as well.