

A new year is when we tend to make a lot of resolutions – including exercising more. We find out how to make the commitment to exercise and make it last, as a family.

by CHARMINE YABSLEY

Workouts THAT WORK FOR YOU

Sometimes there are just not enough hours in the day to get everything done we want to. There's the housework, work, kids' after-school activities, meals to cook, social events to attend and plan... phew! It's exhausting just thinking about it. And, exercise often falls to the bottom of a busy parent's list.

"Unfortunately we tend to put ourselves last when it comes to exercise and fitting it in around our family," says exercise scientist and Weight Watchers Program Director Martha Lourey-Bird. "Yet, it's imperative that we're healthy and fit in order to do what's needed for our families, as well as setting a good example.

"You don't need to schedule in an hour's worth of hard, intensive exercise every day," she says. "Instead, aim for 30 minutes of exercise daily – whether it's walking, jogging, pram pushing, swimming, running or cycling."

Better yet, why not get the whole family involved? "Teaching our children that fitness is fun and enjoyable not only teaches them lifelong positive health habits, but it's a great time for the entire family," she says. ○



WORKOUT WITH BUPA

We sponsor many family-friendly fitness activities to help you stay active. Here are just some of these:

- Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon tryathlon.weetbix.com.au
- Bupa Family Challenge bupafamilychallenge.com.au
- Can Too training cantoo.org.au

For a list of regular events, check out our calendar on pages 34-35.

STAY ACTIVE AND SAVE

At Bupa, we have a number of Member Discount Partner offers to help our members stay active at an affordable price. Try the following activities with your family this summer:

TEN-PIN BOWLING AND LASER ADVENTURES Get 25% off at AMF Bowling, Kingpin Bowling and M9 Laser Skirmish.

TREETOP WALKS Get a 20% discount on the admission price to Illawarra Fly Treetop Adventures (NSW) and Otway Fly Treetop Adventures (VIC).

For more info, visit bupa.com.au/membere exclusives

How to fit in exercise (even with kids!)

Set your 'me' time...

...even if the baby's been up all night, or you've been awake 'till the wee hours putting the finishing touches on your child's science project. "It's times like these that it's more important than ever to get some 'me' time in," says Lourey-Bird.

"Ideally, set aside 30 minutes for yourself. Even if you're going for a walk around the block, as long as you can't be interrupted and you're moving, then you'll feel the benefits."

Have a family challenge.

"Fitness doesn't always have to be about just you, pounding away on the treadmill," says Lourey-Bird.

"Sometimes the best sort of exercise is when you don't realise you're doing it." She suggests heading to the beach and playing a game of football, cricket or beach volleyball.

"Or get on your bikes and explore a new area together," she says.

Set achievable goals.

We all have dreams that we'll exercise for one hour every day and finally lose those last five kilos. The reality? We won't put on our trainers. "Make your goals more realistic," says Lourey-Bird.

"Aim for five sessions, of at least 30-minute workouts each week. For example, if your child is in a stroller, then go for a brisk walk pushing them along. Finish up at a park, so they feel that the walk is part of their outing."

Every little bit counts.

A recent study at the University of NSW found that exercising in short bursts can be just as effective as slogging it out for an hour.

"Life sprints [the time-efficient exercise program that was studied] consists of 20 minutes of exercise with eight minutes sprinting and 12 minutes slow pedalling," explains Associate Professor Steve Boutcher, Director of the University of New South Wales' Fat Loss Laboratory. "This is much shorter than a typical fat-loss exercise program."

Stock up on fitness videos.

Sometimes there are days when you won't want to – or can't – head outdoors, so turn your lounge room into your very own gym. "A good fitness DVD, which has various settings for ability, is great, especially for mums of young children," says Lourey-Bird.

Sure, it's tempting to flop on the sofa the moment they're down for a nap, but promise yourself that you'll only rest after your 30-minute workout.

Set a good example.

Parents who value strenuous team sports are more likely to influence their children to join a team or at least participate in some kind of exercise, and spend less time in front of the TV or computer, a new study says.

"Children copy their parents, so whether it's exercising more, eating well, or just generally embracing a healthy lifestyle, your children will emulate this behaviour," says Lourey-Bird.



NEED MORE HELP?

Finding it hard to stay motivated to exercise? See our special feature on pages 4-7 for advice on setting and achieving your new year goals.