

Fun Fit Hike

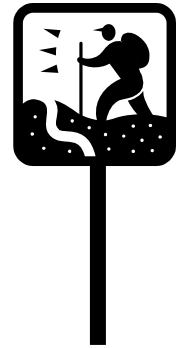


According to the National Association for Sports and Fitness, children 6 – 12 years of age need a minimum of 60 minutes of exercise daily. The American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes a day to maintain a healthy heart. Outdoor exercise is just a trail, large yard or park away and a hike is one of the simplest ways to get children outdoors and moving. Here are a few creative ideas to turn an ordinary hike into fun exercise:



Youth will need:

- Appropriate dress for weather
- Sneakers or trail shoes
- Bottle of water
- Healthy snack



Hopscotch Hike: Turn the trail into a hopscotch game. List items that the children must hop, skip or jump over every time they come across it on a trail. For example: you must never step on a stick but instead hop over it. Whenever you come across a large rock you must stop and do five jumping jacks. A mushroom might mean skipping for 15 seconds. A wildflower could mean hopping on one foot. Get creative. Keep the trail a manageable length like $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile. If it goes too fast you can always do the trail again only backwards. Children will exercise their bodies as well as their observation skills.

Animal Exercise: – You can use a trail or just find an open area for this one. Have a child suggest an animal that lives in the area. Have everyone imitate the movement of that animal for 15 – 30 seconds. Let the next child pick and continue until every child has chosen an animal. This can be done as a follow the leader game too! Before you know it you will have waddled like a duck, jumped like a frog, hopped like a rabbit your way to 30 minutes of exercise!

Try an “A B See Hike”: Have the children find things in nature that begin with every letter of the alphabet. The leader can keep the list and the children can have a scavenger hunt for the items. If you have enough volunteers, you can break into two or three groups and turn it into a contest. Use the “A B See Handout” for this activity. You will also need pencils.

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Fun Fit Hike

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Walking Stick—This is a great craft idea to do before a hike.

What you'll need:

- Large square of cloth
- Walking stick
- Beef jerky
- Water
- Dried fruit
- Optional: Craft supplies



Have the child pack the way the pioneers might have. Instead of a fanny pack, grab a square of cloth and tie it around a walking stick. Forget the snack bars and sports drinks. Pack some beef jerky, water, and dried fruit. They could even decorate their stick with paint, flowers, feathers, or any craft item. To help get the children excited about the hike day, do this activity ahead of time. Walking sticks should NOT be used with the Hopscotch Hike and Animal Exercise.

These are just a few of the many types of outdoor exercises in which you can engage a young outdoor adventurer. Check out these websites for more great outdoor exercise ideas:

www.americanheart.org

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/center/nutrition_center.html

<http://home.howstuffworks.com/hiking-activities-for-kids.htm>

<http://ecochildsplay.com/2007/11/20/four-hiking-activities-for-your-children/>

<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/library/FL/00030.html>

<http://www.whatmovesu.com/index.aspx?vw=MAIN>



Source: Rebecca Miller, Hocking County Soil and Water Conservation District Education Specialist.



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A B See Hike



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