

Garden your way to fitness and play



Fitness Expert
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“ Did you know that current Government guidelines recommend adults be active for at least 30 minutes a day and children for at least 60 minutes? Yet PlantforLife research shows only half (52%) of adults and a third (33%) of children actually achieve this. Most adults (19%) blame lack of time, but for children the most common reasons include lack of motivation (16%) and their preference to play computer games, watch T.V or read (16%).

Fitting in your daily active minutes doesn't have to be so hard. There are plenty of simple things you can do together as a family which can help towards your recommended daily active minutes.

Gardening is one of these. It is a fantastic way to get the whole family outside and working out. From digging to weeding, you really can work up a sweat, learn more about your garden, get creative and enjoy your new outdoor space all year round. ”



More than two thirds (68%) of parents felt gardening could improve their child's mental and physical fitness. So here are some top tips to get them started.

Before starting any new exercise programme make sure you warm up thoroughly.

One Song Dig-athon: If there is a spot in the garden that needs digging get the kids to help - but don't forget to make it fun!

Step 1: Find a small spade or trowel and show the children the area they need to dig.

Step 2: Choose a song to listen to or sing and then get them digging for the length of the song with their left hand. Repeat this with the right hand and before you know it the whole garden will be ready for planting.

Wacky Weeding Races: Weeding is another activity the kids can help with. Giving it a playful twist will make the kids see it more like a game rather than exercise and you can join in too!

Step 1: Divide into two teams and allocate one section of the garden to each.

Step 2: Jump up and down pulling up as many weeds as possible in 10 minutes – the person with the most is the winner.

Hedgehog House: Get the kids to help create something for the garden such as a hedgehog house. This will not only get them running around, but will also help them to get creative.

Step 1: Ask them to gather wood, leaves and twigs from all around the garden..

Step 2: Pile the wood into a mound and pack with the leaves and twigs. Don't forget to leave an entrance for the hedgehogs to get in!

Compost Creating: Creating a compost heap is good for keeping the garden healthy and will encourage children to help.

Step 1: Start a pile by adding leaves, dead plant material and a sprinkle of water.

Step 2: Put a layer of green plants of the top and to make it even better add any cut grass from mowing the lawn.

Step 3: Now it's built keep adding to it, including any kitchen scraps and dead plants.



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Exercises for Adults

To help you keep up with the kids and get your 30 active minutes every day try some of these simple exercises while gardening to keep you in shape.

Digging Dips: While the kids can help with digging up flower beds and borders, some parts of the garden are tougher to dig up. Try this technique below to get your body in shape while you do the digging.

Step 1: Place a large spade on the ground and with evenly timed strokes dig 10 times

Step 2: Rotate yourself 90 degrees and repeat. Rotate and repeat again until you get back to where you started.

Great for toning;

- Shoulder muscles
- Chest muscles
- The top and middle of your back
- Quads, hamstrings and glutes

Lunge & Mow: Mowing the lawn is something we all have to do to keep our garden tidy. Try adding the runner bean run for added benefits.

Step 1: Whilst mowing the lawn lift one knee up about waist height then place it straight back on the floor.

Step 2: Step forward into a lunge, making sure your feet are always hip distance apart. Repeat the lifts and lunges on the right and then left leg

Great for improving;

- Core strength
- Strength of legs
- Posture

PlantforLife: PlantforLife (www.PlantforLife.info/change4life) has been created by the Horticultural Trades Association with the aim of helping people to get the most out of their garden with gardening advice, information and inspirational ideas, highlighting the health and well-being benefits of plants and gardening.



Waterobics: Watering the garden is a task that has to be done regularly so why not use it as an opportunity to get some exercise.

Step 1: Holding the watering can in your left hand, stand with feet about shoulder distance apart and lift your right arm up overhead, arching it slightly, with palms facing left and inhale.

Step 2: As you exhale, lean to the left until you feel a stretch down the right side of your body watering the flowers and plants as you bend. Hold this stretch for 20-30 seconds breathing normally.

Step 3: Exhale slowly as you return to the starting position. Now hold the watering can in the right hand and repeat on the other side. Do three sets of these on each side.

Great for;

- Relaxation
- Core muscle strength

Bend and Prune: Pruning is great for stretching and toning your arms. Try adding the exercise below for even more benefits.

Step 1: Reach up and prune a high part of a bush or tree and lift your heels, standing up on tip toes.

Step 2: Lower your heels back to the floor and reach your arms down to prune a lower part of the bush – repeat three times.

Great for;

- Toning the arm muscles
- Toning the calf muscles
- Improving flexibility

PlantforLife



Campaign financed with aid from the European Union