

The Playground: It's not just for kids anymore...

Your kids may be asking you to take them to the playground. You'll get more bonding time with your children, but also consider that a 30-minute visit at the playground meets the minimum recommendation for daily aerobic physical activity for adults. Your kids will also get half the daily amount of exercise they need in one shot. Children and adolescents should do at least one hour of physical activity each day.

To get started, here are three ways to turn playground time into a workout. Bonus points if you walk or bike to the playground and back instead of driving. Just remember to keep it safe, and use equipment properly to avoid injury.

1. Give yourself a leg up.

Use the jungle gym to strength train. While your kids are playing on the overhead bars, for example, work your lower body with **single-leg step-ups**: Place your left foot on the lowest rung of the monkey bar's vertical ladder. Push off with your right foot until both feet are on the rung. Slowly lower your left foot back to the ground and then your right foot. Repeat the exercise, starting with your right foot.

2. Don't just sit there.

The park bench can also double as exercise equipment. To strengthen your arms, **do some dips**: While sitting on the bench, place your hands on either side of your hips and grip the edge. Extend your legs with your knees slightly bent. Slowly lift your butt off the bench and lower your hips toward the ground, then slowly push back working your triceps to return to your starting position and repeat.

3. Get a jump on good health.

Bring along jump ropes for everyone and see who can jump the longest. Jumping rope is not only a vigorous aerobic activity that can help reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, it also helps keep your bones strong to ward off osteoporosis. So can hopping, skipping and playing basketball with your kids on the playground's courts.

How has Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas helped more than 52,000 kids have a place to play? Through our Healthy Kids, Healthy Families® initiative, we've partnered with [KaBOOM!](#) to support the creation of 18 playgrounds since 2011. Healthy Kids, Healthy Families is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of children through community investments with a focus on nutrition, physical activity, supporting safe environments and disease prevention and management. Learn more in our [2014 Social Responsibility Report](#).

Sources: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Playgroundsafety.org](#)