


KIDDING AROUND

By Becky Moran



Holiday parties with my family usually involve no less than 7 young cousins running around seemingly non-stop. We've all seen it: the endless energy phenomenon. Kids can run around for HOURS and never get tired. It leaves everyone thinking, "Where does all that energy come from, and how can I get some?" or maybe "Please just fall asleep already." As adults with jobs, bills, and responsibilities, it is hard to remember what it was like to be a kid. It is easy to forget how to play – to run because you're a robber and your friend is a cop, to jump and climb your way across the yard because the floor is lava. Many times when adults DO get themselves moving, it is because they'd like to lose weight. While the endorphins from exercise are great, they are nothing compared to finding actual joy in movement itself.

Now, I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with exercising to lose weight. If that is your goal and it keeps you motivated, go for it! But for many people, exercise (even if you want to fit into those skinny jeans) becomes a chore. Anyone can attest to the fact that it is easier to keep doing something that is fun, than something that you dread. Example: It is easy to get yourself to watch Game of Thrones every Sunday at 9pm. It is hard to then get up the next morning at 5am for your run...especially if you took to the internet to discuss the episode with friends.

The key to success in making exercising fun, is reframing the way you think about exercise. Getting yourself moving is the goal. Exercising doesn't HAVE to be hours on the treadmill or doing all the burpees. Kids don't need a strict definition to get moving, and neither do you! As soon as you start realizing movement can be fun, it becomes that much easier to keep moving. So here are a few tips to get you thinking like a kid, and maybe, just maybe, enjoying exercise.

There's An App for That

Technology is great! There is an app for nearly everything these days, particularly health apps. They'll track your water intake, your run, your heart rate, and your sleep. There are many coaching programs out there, but there are

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two that are known to put an emphasis on fun. *Zombies, Run!* is an app that tracks your runs, while providing you with missions narrated by voice actors about a story that involves (incase the name didn't give it away) Zombies. The app allows you to play your own music between the story clips. It even includes Zombie chases where you need to run faster, or risk losing to being eaten in real life! Ok, you won't actually be eaten, but if you're running alone in the woods you might turn around just to check. Another great program is Nerd Fitness' *Rising Heroes*. This program gives you daily and weekly challenges to complete to improve your health and other aspects of your life. A unique aspect of *Rising Heroes* is that it is story based. Users complete different challenges, and the outcomes of those challenges determine how the story will advance.

There's No 'I' in Team

Team sports aren't just for kids and professional athletes. Most communities have some variety of adult sports team. Many times you can fill in an empty slot of someone else's team if you can't seem to get enough of your friends involved. There may also be leagues for sports you'd never thought of trying. When I found my local roller derby league I could barely skate, but now I can jump over 6 inch cones with ease and can hip check with the best of them. Find something that you enjoy and you'll be exercising, making friends, and have a sense of accountability to keep you going.

Explore

Kids love to explore, and you should too! Whether it be your local arboretum, a neighborhood park, a state park (seriously... any park. Support your Parks), the zoo, a historical part of your city, a museum. What do all of these places have in common? Walking! Walking doesn't have to be a boring activity. I've heard some people say that walking on a trail in a park is called Hiking. If your park allows it, you can also throw on your water shoes and walk in the local stream. If you look carefully you'll see fish and tadpoles swimming as you explore. After you pick a location, discover everything you can about it. Walk through every hallway in the museum, and return to your favorite pieces once you've seen everything. On a visit to the zoo, walk through and then double back to see animal feedings or special shows throughout the day. You'd be amazed how many steps you will get in a day of exploring, but it won't even feel like exercise!

When you start thinking about how fun exercise can be, it stops feeling like something you HAVE to do, and more like something you WANT to do. Incorporating even one of these tips can get you on the road to discovering the kid in you.