

To ALL KHS Parents and Students:

Good health promotes good learning, as well as a higher quality of life. The National PTA has developed a booklet entitled "PTA Healthy Lifestyles: A Parent's Guide."

Since we do not have enough booklets for everyone, I will provide information from the booklet each month on this website. Hopefully, this information will help you establish healthy habits in your family---habits that will stay with you and your children long into the future.

"PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

What You Need to Know

Studies show that when children's exercise and fitness needs are met, children are more able to learn and achieve. Given the growing epidemic of obesity and the link between physical activity and academic performance, parents and schools must work together to make quality daily physical education a priority in schools and to give children more opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day.

Unfortunately, the trend is that children are becoming less physically active:

- In 1969, 42 percent of children ages 5 to 18 walked or biked to school; in 2001, only 16 percent did.
- Almost all public elementary schools schedule physical education for their students, but only 17 to 22 percent (depending on grade level) provide physical education on a daily basis.
- About two-thirds of young people in grades 9 to 12 are not engaged in recommended levels of physical activity. Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 33 percent in 2005.
- In 2005 only about half of students in grades 9 to 12 attended physical education classes on one or more days in an average week when they were in school.
- In 2005, more than a third of high schoolers reported watching three or more hours of television per day on an average school day.

This inactivity is not only harming children's health but affecting children's academic success. Physical activity improves children's academic performance.

- Studies show that providing more time for physical activity (by reducing class time for academics) can lead to improved test scores, particularly in the area of mathematics. Physical activity programs have also been linked to stronger academic achievement, increased concentration, and improved reading and writing test scores.
- Children who have daily physical education classes exhibit better attendance and have a more positive attitude about school.
- Children who spend less time in other subjects in order to allow for regular physical education have been shown to do equally well or better in academic classes.

Children need to be physically active not only at school but also at home. Demonstrate the importance of physical activity by making exercise both a personal and a family habit. Take a family walk around the block each night after dinner. Schedule a weekly game of touch football in the park. Encourage your children to take advantage of local sports facilities. Or simply park as far away from store entrances as possible. Regular exercise will make the whole family healthier. Plus, exercising as a family is a great way to spend time together. Below is some advice to keep in mind as your family increases its daily physical activity.

Setting Realistic Goals

Setting goals is an important step in starting a fitness program. Keep in mind that the goals you set should be reasonable and realistic. Using the SMART system will help you set reachable goals.

Example of Setting a SMART Goal

Specific	Be able to run three miles
Measurable	Log activity each week
Action-oriented	Run/Walk for 30 minutes three times a week
Realistic	Run a 10-minute mile by the end of the month
Timely	I want to be able to do this by the end of the month

Phases of Exercise

1. **Warming up:** Before you exercise, you should always warm up your body. When you warm up your body, you increase your blood flow and get your muscles and joints ready to exercise. Most people are warmed up when they begin to sweat and breathe heavier. Warming up makes your muscles more limber and decreases your chance of being injured during exercise.

2. **Stretching:** Once you have warmed up, you can complete stretching exercises that will prepare your whole body. You should specifically target the muscles that will be used while you are actively exercising.

3. **Exercising:** Complete the exercise activities in which you choose to participate. Always make sure to take appropriate safety precautions (e.g., wear protective gear) and to exercise for duration and at an intensity that is appropriate for your fitness level.

4. **Cooling down:** Once you have finished exercising, you are ready to cool down. It is just as important to cool down after exercise as it is to warm up before exercise. When you cool down, you should let your breathing return to normal. It is best to walk around for a few minutes to make sure your breathing is normal and to let your heartbeat slow down. After you have walked around for a few minutes following vigorous exercise, you are ready to begin your cool-down stretches.

Stretching again after you have cooled down will help prevent injuries, help increase your range of motion, and prevent soreness. You should complete the stretches you did before the exercise and add more stretches for the specific muscles worked.

What You Can Do

- Schedule regular times throughout the week for your family to be physically active. Help everyone find something active that they enjoy and feel successful doing.
- Have everyone write down personal goals; then track everyone's progress. Place a chart on the refrigerator and update it regularly as a family
- Use a pedometer to determine which activities require the most steps.

- Give physical activity-oriented gifts; keep the recipient's skills, interests, and/or objectives in mind.
- Always use the stairs.
- Play upbeat music while you twist and shake through your chores.
- Discover what free and low-cost physical activity areas are near your home (e.g., parks, bike trails, hiking trails, tennis courts, swimming pools).
- Start a garden. Have family members plant vegetables, fruits, and flowers.
- Walk, jog, or run on a family treasure hunt.
- Host a sports party where you play traditional games like basketball, softball, volleyball, tetherball, etc.

Where You Can Go

- Action for Healthy Kids, www.ActionForHealthyKids.org
- National Association for Sport and Physical Education, www.aahperd.org/naspe/
- The President's Challenge Physical Activity and Fitness Awards Program, www.presidentschallenge.org
- PTA Parent Resources, Health and Wellness, www.pta.org/parent_resources.html"

CHECK OUT NEXT MONTHS INFORMATION ON NUTRITION!!

All information above was quoted from the PTA Healthy Lifestyles: A Parent's Guide. This is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline.