

Parenting Revolution

Teenager Edition

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ACTIVITY SHEET



Movement incorporates the important functions of powering up (regular exercise) and powering down (quality sleep). However, during the teen years, exercise becomes less of a priority, and staying up late becomes habitual. When exercise is undertaken, it's often engaged for superficial reasons. Rather than health and well-being, popular media platforms emphasise the importance of body image and social value. Beyond just physical health benefits, regular exercise and quality sleep are important for mental health, brain function, stress-regulation, mood management and academic performance.



OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

This session is designed to help you:

- (a)** understand the importance of exercise for a teenager's physical and mental health
- (b)** learn how to motivate your teenager to move more
- (c)** encourage sleep hygiene and self-care

The Benefits of Movement

During adolescence, the brain is making new connections, forming new neural pathways and expanding territory at a rapid rate. This production process requires copious energy. However, as your teen expends energy through exercise, they in turn, generate more energy for their body to fuel their brain's development. Beyond just getting out in the fresh air and sunshine, interacting with their peers and connecting with their bodies, exercise has numerous other physical, mental, emotional, relational and academic benefits for teenagers. Research shows these benefits are both immediate and sustainable.



Get a MOVE On

Despite needing more movement during the teen years, with increased study commitments and use of technology, our teens run the risk of becoming more sedentary. An estimated 81% of adolescents between 11 and 17 years, don't meet recommendations for daily movement. So how do we approach our teens on this topic, and how do we motivate the unmotivated?



When it comes to exercise, how well do you think your teen's got 'their move on'? ✓



Rather than avoiding failure or evading an undesirable outcome, positive motivation focusses on that which is desirable and rewarding.



When it comes to long-term change, strategy is more important than speed. Set bite-size goals that can be celebrated along the way.



There's no one-size-fits-all approach to exercise. Find activities which are appealing. Whether new or novel, be sure to have fun.



POSITIVE MOTIVATION

Which of the following positive outcomes might motivate your teen? ✓

Get healthy, feel good and have fun	Maximise learning and academic results	Energise the body to fuel brain growth
Manage and regulate emotional control	Help promote better quality sleep	Manage and mitigate stress
Improve manners and stabilise relationships	Enhance mental health and well-being	Other



MANAGEABLE GOALS

Which of the following bite-sized goals might your teen be willing to embrace?

1. Try _____ for the first time just to see if it's enjoyable
2. _____ at least 3 days a week for _____ minutes
3. Start by _____ once and then do it again tomorrow
4. Together with my teen, I can _____
5. Only do _____ for 10mins, then review (or resume)
6. _____ with friends at least once per week
7. At _____ AM/PM, make a commitment to _____
8. If _____ was fun, do it again next _____
9. Commit to _____ for the season before considering a change
10. As a family, we can _____ on the weekends

**Rather than
exercising being a
chore or a task to
be ticked off a list,
movement should
be woven into
everyday life.**

SLOGANS LIKE “NO PAIN NO GAIN” TYPECAST EXERCISE AS BEING SWEATY AND PAINFUL, BUT A NECESSARY EVIL IF CHISELLED ABS OR SLENDER PHYSIQUE IS TO BE ACHIEVED. BUT EXERCISE IS SO MUCH BROADER THAN THAT.

Mental and physical fitness not only helps teens feel good, but also function well.



FUN AND ENGAGING

Which of the following activities might your teen find fun to engage or explore? ✓

Rock-climbing		Jogging		Boxing	
Trail running		Pilates		Horse Riding	
Online Exercise Apps		Yoga		Martial Arts	
Bushwalking		CrossFit		Rowing	
Dancing		Basketball		Athletics	
Swimming		Archery		Aerobics	
Netball		Cricket		Gym	
Tennis		Volleyball		Trampolining	
Stand up paddleboard		Soccer		Sailing	
Mountain bike riding		Football		Kayaking	
Cycling		Gymnastics		Surfing	
Skating		Fun Social sports		Skiing/Snowboarding	
Ice skating		Golf		Ultimate frisbee	

How Much is Too Much?

Over-exercise can become a problem, particularly if associated with poor body image, excessive control, or extreme dieting. When assessing whether exercise-based behaviours are helpful or harmful, experts in exercise physiology and behavioural science encourage parents to consider a few key questions.

Does your teenager have rigid routines around type or timing of exercise?	YES	NO
Have you ever discovered your teen exercising in secret?	YES	NO
Do they feel stressed or anxious when not able to exercise as planned?	YES	NO
Do they experience frequent injuries from intensive exercise?	YES	NO
Do they insist on exercising through notable injuries against medical advice?	YES	NO
Do they exercise in the absence of appropriate nutrition?	YES	NO
Does your teen exercise after eating certain foods to burn off calories?	YES	NO
Do they only give themselves permission to eat once they have exercised?	YES	NO

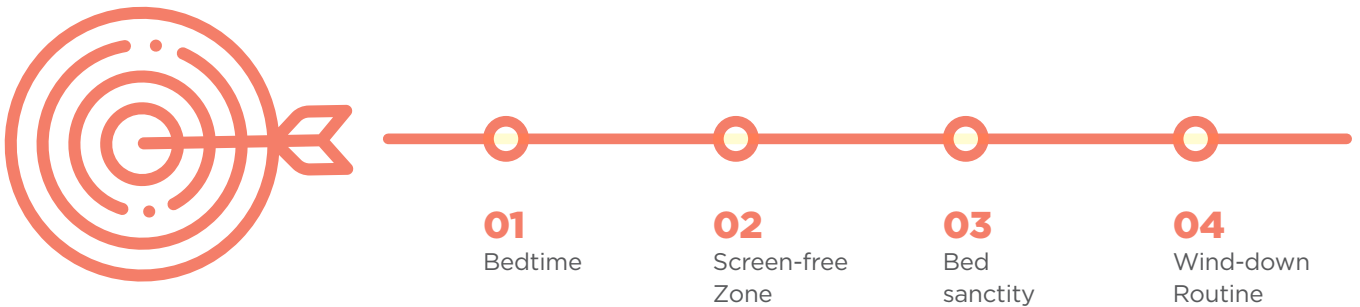


SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE:

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, it may be that your teenager is exercising for the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways. Getting advice from a qualified mental, medical or allied health professional may well be your next best step.

DE-Activate

Movement is vital for physical, mental and emotional well-being. But of equal importance as your teen activating their body and brain, is their ability to deactivate (rest and recharge). Knowing when and how to de-activate is an essential skill for teens to learn. Rest can come in many forms, but none is as fundamental to our daily functioning as sleep. When it comes to physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and relational health, the role of good quality sleep in the adolescent years is just as critical as exercise. Experts recommend that teens require at least 8-10 hours sleep per night in order to function at their best. Sleep hygiene refers to the habits surrounding your bedtime which make your environment conducive to good quality sleep.



1

BEDTIME

As childish as it may sound, maintaining a consistent bedtime routine will help establish your teens body clock. Research has found that maintaining a regular bedtime will not only optimise sleep but has overall health benefits. The same goes for waking in the morning. Rather than the time, it's consistency that counts.

2

SCREEN-FREE ZONE

Use of a TV, iPad or smartphone is a popular way for teens to wind down before bed. However, using electronic devices before bedtime can be physiologically and psychologically stimulating in ways that can adversely affect sleep. Where possible, implement a "device curfew", where your devices are turned off or surrendered at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

3

BED SANCTITY

As basic as it may sound, beds should be reserved for sleeping (not studying, eating, watching movies, gaming, chatting with friends, etc). By associating beds exclusively with sleep, your teen's brain will sub-consciously trigger drowsiness when going bed. When beds are not sanctified for sleep, bedtime can activate instead of deactivate the brain.

4

WIND-DOWN ROUTINE

If your teen has trouble falling asleep, help them to implement a relaxing wind-down routine. Having a bath/shower, reading a book, listening to music, doing some gentle stretches, progressive muscle relaxation, praying, reading the bible or writing in a journal - are all examples of things that can be included in a functional wind-down routine.

Rest. Relax. Refuel. Recharge.

Self-care is the process of taking time each day to prioritise rest and relaxation activities to refuel and recharge. Not only is self-care important for your physical well-being, it also helps to build emotional resilience and self-confidence. Learning the art of self-care is an important lesson that can be passed on to your teens through your own positive example. As you prioritise the responsibility of rest, you're better positioned to emotionally manage the highs and lows that go along with raising teens.



Consider creating and implementing your own self-care plan. Once you've experienced the physical, mental, emotional, relational and spiritual benefits of your plan, share your testimony and encourage your teen to create their own plan.

PHYSICALLY

What are some ways you can physically refuel and recharge?

EXAMPLE: Going for a regular morning walk or run, getting a massage, going to the gym, going to bed early

MENTALLY

What are some ways you can mentally refuel and recharge?

EXAMPLE: Reading a book, researching a topic of interest, watching a documentary, learning a new skill

EMOTIONALLY

What are some ways you can emotionally refuel and recharge?

EXAMPLE: Taking up a hobby, journaling, doing art, talking to a friend, listening to music, playing an instrument

RELATIONALLY

What are some ways you can relationally refuel and recharge?

EXAMPLE: Socialising with friends, acts of kindness for others, spending time with family, going on dates

SPIRITUALLY

What are some ways you can spiritually refuel and recharge?

EXAMPLE: Praying, attending connect groups, reading the bible, listening to podcasts, practicing gratitude