



PHYSICAL EXERCISE & RELAXATION

Physical exercise

Being active is essential for a healthy lifestyle, benefiting both mental and physical well-being. Organising outdoor activities with your child not only provides quality time together but also encourages them to connect with nature, take a break from screens, and engage in exercise. Active hobbies stimulate the release of "happy" hormones, which are excellent for mood regulation, boosting self-confidence, and alleviating stress.

Participating in physical activities as a family strengthens bonds and instils the idea that life should include both "doing" (being active) and "resting" (such as watching TV or going to the movies). Great options for family activities include going for a walk, spending a day at a local attraction, visiting a national park, or exploring a city farm. On rainy days, consider alternatives like bowling, table tennis, museum visits, ice-skating, swimming, or checking out an aquarium.

While it's wonderful to engage in activities as a family, if your teenager prefers to exercise alone or with friends, this can foster lifelong healthy habits while also helping them expend energy and feel physically tired, which can contribute to better sleep.

If your teen is reluctant to be active, encourage them to take regular walks to improve circulation, stretch their muscles, and enjoy the outdoors. It's crucial for them to spend time being active outside each week, ideally every day.



Relaxation

It's essential for your teenager to create a routine that balances schoolwork and leisure time, whether that involves spending time with family, friends, or simply relaxing. This balance will foster a healthy "work/life" equilibrium as they mature, leading to a happier and more fulfilling lifestyle. The main challenge lies in achieving this balance; many teens tend to lean too far in one direction or the other - either prioritising free time at the expense of their studies or becoming overly stressed about academics, resulting in long hours of studying and little relaxation. When your teen is developing their homework and revision schedules, encourage them to allocate time for relaxation as well.

For many teenagers, online activities are a primary source of relaxation. They enjoy gaming, catching up on social media, and exploring various apps. This might cause some concern for you, as it differs greatly from how you spent your free time during your teenage years. While excessive screen time can be detrimental to their health, it's important to acknowledge that their experiences are different; avoid judging them for being engaged with their online communities - as long as it remains within reasonable limits. If you're worried that your teen is spending too much time online, start a conversation instead of expressing frustration. Choose a calm moment for the discussion. A constructive approach is to ask them what they consider to be a reasonable amount of online time each day. Helping them set sensible limits around screen time now will lay the groundwork for healthy habits they can carry into adulthood.

Encouraging your teen to pursue a hobby that distracts them from their phone or laptop can significantly decrease their online time, especially if the hobby involves social interaction. Engaging in an activity that piques their interest allows them to step away from school-related pressures while also acquiring new skills. If they show interest in a specific hobby, be sure to support them in their pursuit.

