Cutting back on screen time can motivate your tween or teen to get more physical activity and maintain a healthy weight. Here are ways to set screen time limits for the whole family.

**Hold a family meeting**
Discuss ways to reduce screen time, and draw up a contract for everyone to sign. For example, “Silence and put away devices during meals.” You’ll pay more attention to your food, making you less likely to overeat. Or help everyone sleep better—which lowers the risk of obesity—by pledging to turn off devices an hour before bedtime.

**Choose to move**
Brainstorm active alternatives to screen time. Instead of playing soccer or tennis video games, your tween could play actual soccer or tennis with friends. Rather than a family movie night, go to open gym night at your local rec center or take a free yoga class at the library.

**Game-day treats**
Make Super Bowl Sunday super healthy with these teen-friendly ideas. Suggest that your teenager make mini pizzas, using zucchini slices for the “crust.” Just top with marinara sauce and mozzarella cheese, and broil until the cheese bubbles. Instead of serving chips, he might sprinkle jicama sticks with lime juice and chili powder.

Swapping nonfat Greek yogurt for sour cream is a tasty way to eat more protein and less fat. Your tween could add a teaspoonful to tacos or whisk it into a ranch dressing recipe. Maybe she’ll even layer Greek yogurt with refried beans, guacamole, salsa, cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes for a seven-layer dip!

**Heart month**
Give every heart in your household a workout during American Heart Month. Bundle up and go for a winter run. Or hold a friendly snowball fight in your yard. When vigorous exercise becomes a family habit, everyone’s heart health will improve.

**Active and screen free**

---

**What’s that ingredient?**

When choosing packaged foods, it’s usually best to select ones with a short list of recognizable ingredients. But some unfamiliar-sounding ingredients are actually good for your teen! Share this advice to expand her food-label vocabulary.

- **Ascorbic acid** is another name for vitamin C, which supports your child’s immune system. Encourage her to look for breakfast cereals that are fortified with ascorbic acid.

- **Lactobacillus acidophilus** is the *good* bacteria in yogurt that helps to promote healthy digestion. Have your teen choose yogurt with “live and active cultures.” Products like squeezable yogurt, bottled yogurt smoothies, and yogurt-covered pretzels and raisins may not contain these cultures.

---

© 2018 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Winning nutrition for young athletes

To fuel up and play her best, it’s important for your athlete to consume the right foods and drinks at the right times. Consider this game plan.

Meals and snacks. Have your child eat a meal 2–3 hours before a practice or game, a snack when it’s over, and a meal within 2 hours afterward. Protein builds and repairs muscles, while carbohydrates provide energy, so her meals should include both. For example, she might have an apple and a turkey and cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread. Or she could eat baked salmon, brown rice, and a green vegetable.

Drinks. Water is usually the best choice to stay hydrated before, during, and after exercise. Encourage your tween or teen to take a water bottle to practice and games and to drink when she feels thirsty. Also, while low-fat chocolate milk may sound like a treat, it happens to contain the ideal protein-carb ratio for athletes, so she might drink a glass after a workout. Explain that she doesn’t need sports drinks—which are typically filled with sugar—unless she exercises vigorously for more than an hour.

Fiber-ful snacks

Winning nutrition for young athletes

In the Kitchen

Fiber-ful snacks

How can your teens get the 25–31 grams of fiber they need a day? Snacks like these can help—each contains a rich source of fiber.

Artichoke salad

Drain 1 6-oz. can artichoke hearts. Cut the hearts in half, and mix with 1 tbsp. crumbled feta cheese, 1 tsp. lemon juice, and pepper to taste.

Roasted chickpeas

Preheat oven to 375°. Drain and rinse 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, and pat dry with a clean towel. In a bowl, whisk 1 tbsp. olive oil, 1 tsp. minced garlic, 1 tsp. pepper, and a pinch of salt. Add the chickpeas, and toss to coat. Cook in a single layer on a baking sheet for about 50 minutes, until golden brown and crisp.

Freeze and save

With three growing teens, I needed to stretch my food budget. One strategy I discovered was to make better use of the freezer by buying food in bulk and stocking up.

At the grocery store, I look for value packs of meat like chicken breasts and lean ground beef. The kids and I place individual portions into bags, label and date them, and put them in the freezer. I also buy bulk quantities of vegetables that are in season. When green peppers were on sale, for example, I bought a few pounds, and my teens helped me chop them and put them in bags to freeze.

Now it’s easy to add them to scrambled eggs, fajitas, and casseroles.

To remember what’s in the freezer, we keep a list on the refrigerator. Then, we consult the list before we go shopping to make sure we don’t waste money buying something we already have on hand.

Cool-down stretches

Post-workout stretching can help your teenager maintain his flexibility and range of motion—and prevent injury. Suggest these two stretches.

1. Shoulder stretch. Reach your left arm across your chest, keeping it parallel to the floor. Hold it in the crook of your right elbow, and stretch. Repeat with the other arm. Hold for 30 seconds on each side.

2. Hamstring stretch. Sitting on the floor, extend your right leg straight out in front. Bend your left leg to place the sole of your left foot on your right inner thigh. Lean forward to feel the stretch in the back of your extended thigh, and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.
Power Up! Power Down!

Screens may be everywhere these days, but that doesn't mean your child needs one to have fun! In fact, your youngster can have even more fun — and stay healthier — by powering down the screens and powering up the physical activity. Here's how.

**Tip #1: Keep a log**

With this poster, family members will see at a glance how much time they spend being active vs. in front of a screen. Let your child divide a poster board into two columns: “Active time” and “Screen time.” For every 15 minutes a family member does something like badminton or yoga, he can draw a picture in the first column (birdie, yoga pose). And for every 15 minutes spent on a screen, he should draw the device used (TV, laptop, video game, smartphone) in the second column. Help your youngster tally up your totals once a week. If your family had more screen time than active time, aim to improve by at least 15 minutes the following week.

**Tip #2: Promote playtime**

Encourage your child to play actively for at least 60 minutes every day. Chances are she'll get so caught up in playing, she'll forget all about screens. Try this: Make a “play door.” You and your youngster could write ideas for active play on sticky notes (“fly a kite,” “juggle balls”). Place these notes on her bedroom door or inside the front door. When she has free time, she can pick an activity — or think of a new one to add.

**Tip #3: Find your niche**

Your child can't play a video game if he's climbing an indoor rock wall or tumbling across a mat! Give him healthy ways to use his time by letting him take a class or join a team. Check out classes and groups at community centers, after-school programs, or places of worship. He can try various activities until he finds ones he likes. He might decide on rock climbing, running, gymnastics, or even pickleball.

**Tip #4: Fill a “TV basket”**

Keep a basket of your youngster's toys near the TV. Then, instead of watching shows, she gets to play with something from the basket. Switch up the contents each week to keep things interesting. Include a Twister game, a jump rope, or a library book of children's poems to act out, for instance.

### Active alternatives

Here are 10 quick, easy, and screen-free activities your youngster can enjoy indoors or outdoors.

1. Form a marching band with toy instruments (or pots, pans, and wooden spoons).
2. Play leapfrog.
3. See which foot you can balance on the longest.
4. Form a conga line — stand in a row, hold onto the shoulders of the person in front of you, and “snake” through the house or yard.
5. Make up and perform cheers.
6. Hold a limbo contest.
7. Tape down a long piece of yarn as a “tightrope,” and walk on it.
8. Do the hokey-pokey.
9. Have an egg-and-spoon relay race — hard-boil the eggs first!

Nutrition Nuggets™

© 2016 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
Power Up! Power Down!

Give screens a break

It's easier to avoid watching TV or using your phone if you plan ahead. Consider these ways to manage screen time for the whole family:

- Set a “screen bedtime” at least an hour before your youngster's bedtime. Your child may enjoy “tucking in” the TV or computer for the night by covering it with a blanket and placing a stuffed animal beside it.
- Keep TVs and other devices out of your youngster's bedroom. He'll have less screen time, and it will be easier for you to supervise his activities.
- Switch off computers, video game systems, and TVs when you're not using them. After your family watches a show, turn off the TV rather than channel surfing to find more programs. And if your laptop is off, you'll be less tempted to constantly check work email or social networks.
- Turn your car into a screen-free zone. Make a point of showing your child how you put your phone in your bag or glove compartment before you start the car. Then, enjoy time together by talking about the scenery, counting cars of a specific color, or singing songs.

Tip #5: Start a club

Suggest that your child launch a “Fitness Club” with her friends. Members should agree on a time to meet and take turns hosting. Each week's host gets to choose the activity. One week they might play follow the leader through a sprinkler, while another week they could organize a kickball game. Idea: Mix things up by offering to take them on field trips for activities they haven’t tried—say, to play volleyball at a sand volleyball pit in the park.

Tip #6: Enjoy the outdoors

There’s so much to discover outside. Look for active ways to enjoy nature together. For instance, your youngster could take a blank notebook on a family walk and draw pictures of the trees and plants. Or you might ride bikes on a path you haven’t explored before. Gardening is good exercise, too—and you’ll boost your family's health even more by eating the vegetables and herbs you and your child grow.

Tip #7: Be the star

Challenge your youngster to develop her own active versions of favorite TV shows or video games. If she enjoys a reality dance program, she and her friends might put on music and make up dance routines. Or if she likes a video game with an obstacle course, she could set up her own course in the backyard to race over, under, around, and through with friends.

Tip #8: Volunteer to help others

Look for a place in your community where you can volunteer as a family. Check the parks and recreation department and your local United Way for active ideas. Perhaps you’ll find a playground cleanup day or a trail-clearing event. Or train for a “fun run” or a 5K to support a good cause. Another idea is to help neighbors in need, perhaps ones who are older, have new babies, or are ill. You could offer to do yardwork, wash cars, or walk dogs.

Editor’s Note: Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.