

“Walk Your Child To School Workout” Helps Parents and Children

By Eleanor C. Blitzer, M.D.

Q: I just don't have enough time to spend with my child, though I seem to skimp on everything, even on taking care of myself. Any suggestions?

A: Try this: The Walk Your Child to School Workout.

Sure you're a good mom. You're a great mom! You take your children to school each morning, you volunteer, you work a part-time job (or maybe full-time), you try to shop wisely, you cook, do most of the cleaning and laundry, you run the house, and you drive the children to all their activities. You try to keep yourself fit. But somehow, you never seem to have much time just to enjoy your child(ren).

You need the *Walk Your Child to School Workout!* This workout is designed to fit into your schedule. It is flexible, you can do it with your friends or just with your own family, it doesn't cost anything (you can even save money on gas), you will be a role model for all who see you, and you can spend quality time with your children while you do it. So how does it work?

For every mile you walk, you will burn 50 to 100 calories, depending on your size and efficiency. If you walk one-half mile to school, and home again, that will be 100 to 200 calories per day, five days a week. That adds up to 500 to 1000 calories a week, and one-half to one pound per month. During the school year, you can lose 5 to 10 pounds. Of course, not everyone wants to lose weight, but we all want to be fit. Walking is the exercise that almost everyone can do. It will tone most of your muscles, stimulate your heart, increase the HDL-cholesterol (the good cholesterol), and give your endorphins (your feel good chemicals) a boost.

Your child(ren) will benefit, too. They will become fitter, more awake, and more ready to learn. Studies have shown that children who are at the top in fitness tests do better academically. They will have time to talk to you, built into every day. You can use the time to review math facts, spelling words, or any subject. You can show them the sights (sky, trees, flowers, insects, birds, mud, cars), the smells, the noises. You can tell them about your childhood, in which you walked to school through the hurricane, or the snowstorm.

When you arrive, you can meet your friends. If you wish, you can do your aerobics in the schoolyard, or jog around the neighborhood, or just enjoy a few minutes of conversation. Think of the guilt-free breakfast you can eat!

No time for this? Think again. It takes 10 minutes to walk one-half mile. If you spend 5 minutes loading up the car, 5 minutes driving to school, and 10 minutes in the carline, and only 5 minutes to return home and park, it will take LESS time to walk to and from school.

The time you spend with your child walking will become a treasured tradition for both of you.

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