

# Playful ideas for family walks



**Active kids are happy kids—they like to be running around and having fun.**

**Bodies were not designed to sit down all the time—they need to walk, jump, run and move.**



## Activity helps kids to:

- Be happy
- Sleep well at night
- Listen and learn at school
- Control their weight
- Grow up healthy and strong
- Meet new friends
- Reduce anxiety and stress
- Manage their behaviour
- Express themselves



Getting active is great for adults too; the more active you are, the better you'll feel – both now and in years to come. When children see you joining in and having fun in the different activities, it'll encourage them to be active too.

By getting enthusiastically involved, you'll not only spend more quality time with them but will show them that it's enjoyable, and that you value being active. It also shows them how to interact with others in the game and play fairly etc.

## What can you do to help?



- Be an active role model and plan to do some activities together
- Challenge your kids!
- Encourage your child to 'have a go' at lots of different activities
- Help to practice basic skills e.g. catching, throwing
- Praise and reward effort

## How active should children be?

### **Early years (under 5s) – for infants who are not yet walking**

Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments e.g. 'tummy time' – this includes any time spent on the stomach including rolling and playing on the floor, reaching for and grasping objects, pulling, pushing and playing with other people and parent and baby swim sessions

All under 5s should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

*Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines.*

### **Early years (under 5s) – for infants who are capable of walking**

Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (3 hours), spread throughout the day e.g. riding a bike, running, chasing games, walking and skipping.

All under 5s should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

Most UK pre-school children currently spend 120–150 minutes a day in physical activity, so achieving this guideline would mean adding another 30–60 minutes per day.

*Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines.*

## **Children and young people (5–18 years)**

All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day e.g. bike riding, fast running, swimming, football.

Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week e.g. swinging on playground equipment, hopping, skipping, gymnastics, tennis.

All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

*Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines.*

## **What to take on your walk?**

Walking is brilliant as you need no special equipment just a comfortable pair of shoes and appropriate outdoor clothing whether it be sunny, raining or cold. Depending on how long you are going out for you may want to take the following:

- Snacks and water – always good to encourage tired children - how about taking food for a picnic
- Mobile phone – why not take photos to capture your fun day out
- Sunscreen, plasters etc



Take a Tupperware box or small backpack to carry interesting items found along the way or to carry balls etc for any activities to be played at the park, playground etc

## Walking hints and tips:

- Choose a wiggly, winding route rather than a long straight boring one
- Choose a fun destination like the local playground, park, woodland or friends house
- Walk to school, the shops and to the library, family centre, leisure centre



For local walking routes both town and country visit – [www.discovercarmarthenshire.com](http://www.discovercarmarthenshire.com)

## Games to play during your walk

An excellent way of getting children more active is allowing them plenty of time and space for play. Playing is essential for children's health and well being. Why not include some fun and playful games during your next family walk that will get the children more active and make it an enjoyable experience for everyone.

**Health and Safety** - When playing these games please ensure that the safety and ability of participants are considered. Remember pedestrian and road safety.

### Tag

Agree who will be 'it'. 'It' chases everyone else until they are able to tag someone with the touch of their hand. This person then becomes 'it'.

### Interval training

Whilst walking get the children at intervals to run, skip, hop, scuttle sideways, jump.



### I Spy

'I spy with my little eye something beginning with ...' e.g. T for Trees. Look for animals, birds, people, buildings etc

For younger players you can replace with 'I spy' with my little eye something **\*\*colour\*\*** e.g. blue, green

### **When you hear...**

Agree on a sound e.g. bird chirp, car horn etc

Create a line (single file), start walking, when you hear the sound the person at the front moves to the back – carry on until everyone has a go.

### **Count Off**

Pick something to keep track of, from red cars to dead trees.

Make it a contest or collaborate, whichever is more appealing to your crew of walkers.



### **Try a Nature Trail**

Doing a nature trail is a great way to stop and look at your surroundings from a different perspective. Give it a go and you and your children will be surprised and delighted by what you discover!

There are 'official' nature trails dotted around all over the country - check out your local council's website which should give details of nature trails you can follow in your area.

Or do your own nature trail either at a familiar spot or a new outdoor space you haven't yet explored.

Give your child a notepad and pen so they can draw and write down the names of all the different things they see on their trail around the park - you can look up each animal, insect, plant or flower on the internet or in the encyclopaedia when you get home to find out a little more about them.

### **Funny Walks**

Kids love to do silly walks. This is a simple game of taking it in turns to decide how to walk until reaching the next landmark (e.g. gate, stile, tree).

Suggested walks:

- Monkey – swinging arms and bandy legs.
- Lion – fingers clawed and strong movements
- Horse – nodding head and galloping
- Crocodile – arms stretched out in front, opening and closing to imitate jaws

Sound effects are optional (e.g. roaring like a lion) but do consider other walkers and wildlife which may like a slightly more peaceful afternoon!



### **Hunter and Prey**

One player is the hunter. Others shout out what animal they are e.g. lion, dog, fox....

The hunter decides which animal they will hunt i.e. 'I am going to catch the lion'. The hunter chases the lion.

The lion needs to shout another animal's name before the hunter reaches them. The hunter then chases the new animal. The game continues until the hunter manages to catch an animal and that animal then becomes the hunter.

### Go find...

A player chooses an object on the walk pathway and says, "First one to find a ..."

The player fills the blank with the object (e.g. Pink flower).

The rest run to find the object and the winner then chooses the next object to find.

### Games to play when you arrive at a local park, open space etc

**Health and Safety** - When playing these games please ensure that the safety and ability of participants are considered. Remember pedestrian and road safety.

### Alphabet Ball

If your child has just learned his letters, Alphabet Ball is the perfect ball game.

Toss a ball back and forth (or among several children); saying the next letter of the alphabet each time you catch it. If you'd like, sing the letters to your child's favourite tune.

When you reach "Z," whoever has the ball gets to sing the whole alphabet song from beginning to end. (For children who are not yet able to throw the ball accurately, try rolling it instead.)

### **In and Out**

This outdoor ball game works best with a large group of children. Have the children stand in a circle, holding hands.

Place one child in the middle of the circle along with a ball. The child in the middle should try to kick the ball out of the circle, using only their feet. The goal of the rest of the children is to keep the ball in the circle.

When the child in the middle succeeds, they can pick the next child to go into the middle of the circle. (Make sure that each child gets a chance before the other children can go back for seconds.)

### **Name Ball**

Have the children stand in a circle around you.

Throw a ball into the air as high as you can and call out a child's name. The child who you named gets to try to catch the ball as it comes down.

Then that child takes your place in the middle of the circle. Encourage children to call out a different name each time they have the ball.



### **Through the Tunnel**

Stand with your legs spread wide, and set the challenge of rolling the ball through the "tunnel" that is formed. As the child becomes better and better at this, stand further away and see if they can still succeed.

If you are playing with several children, challenge the child to roll the ball through multiple "tunnels," with the rest of you standing in a line so that your legs line up.



### **Shot put**

Take some baskets or buckets with you. Arrange these in a circle and try and throw beanbags into them.

Want to make it a bit harder? Take two steps back after each go or use different sized baskets or buckets.

### **It's relay time!**

Get into two teams, use a plastic bottle as a baton and run to your team member.

They'll then take the baton onto the next person until you've done a lap of the park.

Too easy? Try it whilst hopping!

### **Triple jump chain**

Hold hands with your friend whilst you hop, skip and jump as far as you both can.

Then add another friend and do the same. Keep adding as many friends as possible.

### **Throw, catch, step**

Your friend throws a ball - if you catch it, you step back. But if you drop it, you step forward.

After a few goes, each time you catch it take two steps back.

## Parachute Games

Parachute games can be used for sitting or standing activities. Each individual is encouraged to hold a handle on the edge of the parachute. The fabric of a parachute used for games is light and flexible, and easy to hold and move.

**Parachute games can be a lot of fun and good exercise too!**



### What will you need?

- A parachute for games can be purchased in a variety of sizes from 2m to 10m, and in a variety of colours.
- Space to carry out parachute games
- Games can be completed indoors or outdoors.
- Parachute games can include the use of bean bags, a large soft ball, small plastic balls etc

### Step by step guide

There are many activities you could do using the parachute.

- Each individual should hold a handle on the parachute.
- Start by encouraging everyone to move the parachute up and down, and shaking the parachute.
- Use a soft sponge ball and start rolling the ball on the parachute. Encourage everyone to help change the direction of the ball.
- Encourage the ball to move so that it can be used to pick an individual. When it lands in front of someone, start the alphabet game.

### **Alphabet Games**

Decide on a topic e.g. girls names. Move a small ball around the parachute, allow the ball to stop, when it stops on someone, that person begins the game with A for Amanda. Move the ball around again and the next person it stops with needs to think of a girls name beginning with B. Continue until you reach Z. Other ideas are boys names, cars, animals, food, countries.

### **Mexican Wave**

One player raises their arms, holding onto the parachute. This action is repeated around the circle to create a wave.

### **Parachute Football**

Have two teams, and the team on one side tries to shoot the ball off the opposite side to get a goal.

### **Catapult**

Place a ball in the middle of the parachute, and catapult it as high as possible.

### **Stormy weather**

Everyone holds the parachute very still, and then slowly simulates a storm so that the parachute is shaken faster and faster, and then becomes calm and still again.

### **Merry—Go—Round**

Children turn their bodies sideways and hold the chute in one hand. They then walk around in a circle, for variety they can hop, skip, jump etc.

### **All change**

Call out a birthday month, pre assigned numbers, colours etc and those children swap places under the chute before it falls.

### **One hand run**

Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the other for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run in the other direction.

### **Name Game**

Sung to 'Row, Row, Row your Boat'.

As you sing the song, have the players raise the parachute above their heads. When a player is named have him/her run under the parachute. Then slowly lower the parachute to try and trap them.

'Up, up, up it goes

Down, down, down it comes

If your name is...(put a child's name in here)

Now's your turn to run'.

### **When the parachute goes up**

Sung to 'If your happy and you know it'.

'When the parachute goes up—Stomp your feet

When the parachute goes up—Stomp your feet

When the parachute is high—and floats up in the sky

When the parachute goes up—Stomp your feet'.

Variations to this include bend your knees, wiggle your bottom, lift your leg, shout hooray, shake your head...

### **Jellyfish Jaunt**

Everyone holds the parachute around the edge then goes for a run. It will look like a weird monster running around.

## Further Information

Change4life

[www.change4lifewales.org.uk](http://www.change4lifewales.org.uk)

Hywel's House Online Healthy Lifestyle Resource Centre

[Hywel Dda University Health Board | Hywel's House](#)

Family Information Service

<http://fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/>

Twitter - @playsirgar

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