

ROCKLAND NEWS

It's Not the Chill-Out, It's the Cool-Down that Matters



As cheerleaders, we do a lot of running, skipping and jumping during our routines. Most of the time we take a moment to warm up our bodies, like walking onto the football field before the game or doing some knee bends before we do cartwheels and splits. But last week Mel almost fainted after the basketball game and coach said it's because we did not do a proper cool-down after our routine.

Before any vigorous activity you should always warm up. This means walking, marching, jumping in place, knee bends and shoulder rolls. But after you are active, you need to bring down your heart and breathing rate slowly rather than abruptly stopping what you were doing. Good cool-down activities include walking, head rolls, waist turns and stretching. It's important to know that you should only stretch AFTER you have been active and your muscles are warm, or you could hurt yourself.

Mel got dizzy because her heart was racing and she didn't give it time to slow down. Next time you are active and raise your heart and breathing rate, make sure to both warm up AND cool down.

Being Physically Active Means More than Just Aerobics



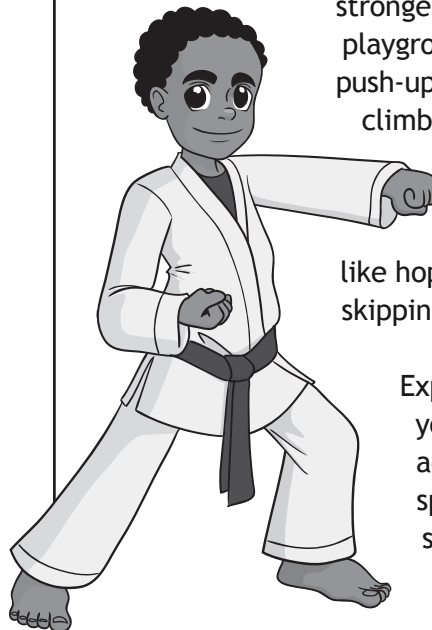
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that kids get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Physical activity could include many things like running, biking or playing a sport like football or basketball. But there are actually three different types of activity that provide important benefits to the body. The three categories are aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities.

Aerobic activities increase your heart and breathing rates. Examples of aerobic activity include running, tennis, swimming or biking. You should do these activities for at least 20 minutes at a time to benefit your heart. Muscle-strengthening activities make the muscles

stronger by working harder like playground games, swinging, push-ups, sit-ups and tree climbing. Bone-strengthening

activities promote your bone growth and include things

like hopscotch, hopping, skipping and jumping.



Experts recommend that you mix up your physical activity. Variety is the spice of life, and it's super important when it comes to being active.

Q: *I have heard people talking about balancing the food you eat with physical activity you do. What exactly does this mean?*

A: *That's a great question. What they're talking about is the importance of balancing healthy eating with appropriate levels of physical activity. Think about it like this . . . the food that we eat contains calories, or measures of energy found in foods. All foods have a certain number of calories that tell us the potential energy we can get from eating that food. When we are active, we burn these calories. What we mean by balance is to make sure the calories we take in equal the calories our bodies use through physical activity.*

If we eat more food or consume more calories than our bodies use, we can become out of balance. If we eat less food or take in less calories than our body needs, then again we would be out of balance. In order to maintain a healthy body weight we should try to balance eating healthy with regular physical activity.



Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) is a nonprofit organization working to empower youth with the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions for a lifetime. Find out more by visiting their website at www.HLConline.org.



My Corner of the World



Every night after dinner my family curls up on the couch to watch TV until it was time to go to bed. Everybody says that with work and school, we don't have time to be active. But I started thinking that maybe we could do something as a family right after dinner and before we sit down to watch TV.

My mom has a big calendar that hangs on the kitchen wall. Last week I took it down and told my parents that we should try to do something active every night right after dinner. My brother suggested we walk, I thought we could jump rope and my dad wanted to shoot basketball in the driveway. Before long, we had a list of things to do for three whole weeks!



Tonight we're going to play Frisbee and Friday night is dancing. Being active is important to burn calories or use the food we eat, and to make our heart and muscles strong and healthy.

I think this is something all families could do and I hope you'll give it a try.