

# 8 Ways to Get More From Fitness Trackers [1]

These days, chances are good that you'll spot someone sporting a fitness band or watch on their wrist wherever you go. Maybe you even have one of these activity trackers yourself.

So have you thought about getting them for your kids? Though they'll have different goals than you or your adult friends, your children might be motivated to move more when they wear a tracker. (Just 15% of kids get the 60 minutes of daily exercise that they need.)

Try these tips to help your kids get the most from these gadgets.

Assess Your Symptoms

1. Get a wearable when they're ready. Just because they're walking or heading off to preschool doesn't mean your little ones are ready to record their every movement. Kindergarten or first grade is a good starting point for using a tracker. Earlier than that, and they'll probably be too young to get the point.

2. Choose the right device. Although they might envy the colorful wristband or fancy screen on your device, your kids might be better off with a tracker specifically made for them. Wearables made for children display stats more simply (they'll light up when kids have been moving for a certain number of minutes, for instance). That makes them easier for young kids to use and understand. Bonus: They're also generally less expensive than trackers for adults.

3. Don't focus on steps too early. In kindergarten and first grade, kids aren't old enough to really comprehend big numbers -- so a goal of 10,000 steps a day, which is the general recommendation for grown-ups, can be overwhelming. Instead, have them aim to be up and moving for 60 minutes a day. Then remind them of all the ways they can get to that goal -- running around the backyard, playing basketball in the driveway, or having a dance party in the den.

4. Save steps for middle school. Tracking steps can also be a question of anatomy: Little kids generally take more steps a day because their legs are shorter. So the 10,000-steps-a-day goal doesn't make sense for them. Don't focus on that target until they're around 13 or 14 and have longer legs

5. Make it fun! Once your kid has gotten the hang of his device, you may need to keep him interested in racking up steps or minutes of activity. Create a family challenge where everyone sets a goal and tries to

beat it. You can track everyone's progress through a smartphone app or a chart on the fridge. Or how many minutes or steps would it take to walk across your town, to the next state, or to Disney World? Help your kids figure it out, and see how far they can go.

6. Set separate goals. Give each of your kids their own challenge to make competition fair and more fun. If your 10-year-old is competing with your 6-year-old, they'll probably hit very different numbers throughout the day -- and you don't want your little one feeling down because she can't keep up.

7. Go over their numbers nightly. Set aside some time every evening to talk about the activity your kids got throughout the day and what they might do differently tomorrow. If they only exercised for 30 minutes, for instance, you can suggest that they take a 20-minute bike ride after school and a 10-minute study break to shoot hoops or do stretches. Ask for their ideas about what they'd like to do to up their activity -- if their goals involve stuff they like, they'll be more inclined to go for it and get moving more.

8. Track together. If you want your kids to track more moves, get yourself off the couch, too! Plan time every day to move together as a family, whether it's taking a walk together or kicking around a soccer ball after dinner. You'll rack up more activity on your devices and teach them that moving is a fun part of everyday life.

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