

# Fun Fitness: Exercises That Don't Feel Like Work

Who says fitness has to be deadly dull? There are many activities that will make you break a sweat without longing for the finish line.

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Many people believe there's no such thing as fun fitness. In their minds, a good workout means trudging on a treadmill or [lugging weights around a joyless gym](#), and that there's no gain without the pain.

"They think of it as more of a chore, something they have to do because they've been told to do it by their doctor or physical therapist," says Julie Ann McCarthy, a physical therapist in San Francisco and a spokeswoman for the American Physical Therapy Association.

This, of course, is nonsense. There are [many ways to combine fun and fitness](#).

## Fun Fitness: Let's Count the Ways

### Activities that fall under the fun fitness umbrella include:

- **Competitive sports.** "A lot of guys come in and say, 'I don't like exercising, but I like playing basketball,'" McCarthy says. "The camaraderie and the group setting help you have fun and forget you're working your heart and lungs." Soccer, tennis, and racquetball are other competitive sports that can help improve your fitness. Some gyms are even offering competitive dodge ball as a fun game to get your heart pumping.
- **Outdoor activities.** [Walking](#), jogging, bicycling, and swimming can get you out in fresh air and sunshine, making your fitness workout feel less like work and more like play. "I usually tell people to start with a run-walk program with a friend," McCarthy says. "You can slowly build yourself up so you're running more and walking less." Other options include kayaking, hiking, inline skating, and skateboarding.
- **Martial arts.** Classes that teach karate, jujitsu, judo, tae kwon do, or kickboxing provide a workout aimed at improving your fitness, coordination, and mental discipline.
- **Dance classes.** Energetic ballroom dancing is considered a vigorous workout by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine. Dance styles like the salsa, meringue, and mambo can keep you whirling and twirling so much you forget you're actually getting into shape.
- **Acrobatics.** Activities like tumbling, headstands, and somersaults can condition your body and help you feel like a kid again. You can use a balance beam, rings, or just a padded floor. Bouncing on a trampoline is another type of acrobatic fitness fun. Just be careful — these activities can lead to injury if your form is off or you lose your balance.
- **Kid stuff.** Don't discount the fitness to be had in kids' activities like jumping rope or riding a pogo stick. For example, jumping rope improves your balance, stamina, and coordination, while working muscle groups in your arms, legs, chest, back, shoulders, and abdomen.
- **Nintendo Wii.** The venerable video game maker upped the fun factor for fitness when it released its Wii Fit game. Other game makers have followed suit with more video workouts involving the Wii. "It's a good place to start," McCarthy says. "If it gets people up and moving, that's great, and hopefully it will escalate into more intense exercise."

You can make any **fitness activity** more fun by recruiting a workout buddy or joining a group. Nearly every town has a jogging or bicycle club in which you can take part. "People are more motivated when they're held accountable by someone else," McCarthy says. "It's also more fun when you have company."

Another way to curtail fitness boredom is to mix up your activities. "With any exercise, your body adapts," McCarthy says. "It's important to change your routine so you don't plateau."

**Reference website:** [http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/diet-and-fitness/exercises.aspx?xid=cs\\_fion\\_nl](http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/diet-and-fitness/exercises.aspx?xid=cs_fion_nl)