

## **SMALL THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE**

*By Margot Rutledge*

One of the reasons I stopped working as a dietitian in a hospital was that I was saddened to see that in many cases, diets don't work. I would counsel patients on twelve or fifteen hundred calorie diets only to have them return weighing more than when they started and feeling very frustrated. What I have learned in my years as a trainer and coach is that small behavior changes that become a way of life can result in significant positive changes that last.

Many of you have requested that we put our tips booklets into a newsletter so here they are. Here's a suggestion: If you see some tips you want to try as a family, commit to one or two at a time, for a period of eight weeks and see what happens. It takes that long to form a habit. Remember, always seek medical advice before you or your children begin any exercise or fitness program or change your diet.

### **1. 6 by 10, 3 by 20**

Set a goal to exercise or play sixty minutes a day. It doesn't have to be all at once. Spread it out if you like; perhaps exercising three times for 20 minutes or 6 times for 10.

### **2. Screen Time**

Limit screen time to 2 hours each day: television, computer, video games.

### **3. Ball Games**

How many games can you play with the word "ball" in the name? Baseball, football, kickball, tether ball, bowling ball.

### **4. Beat Your Time**

Improve on your personal best time in walking or jogging or a backyard obstacle course.

### **5. Take the "Talk Test"**

If it is difficult to carry on a conversation while exercising, you are working too hard.

### **6. One tomato, Two Tomato, Three Tomato, Four...**

Include a fruit or vegetable at every meal. They make great snacks too!

## 7. Take the Stairs

Whenever you have the chance, walk up a flight of stairs or park just a little further away and walk the distance.

## 8. Buddy Up

Find a partner in fitness. It's more fun to exercise with a friend: someone to talk with, someone to support you.

## 9. If it's White, Take Few Bites

Limit the amount of refined foods such as white bread, white flour, white rice and white sugar. Whole grains provide many more nutrients for your body.

## 10. Keep on Moving

Swing your arms, kick your feet. Dance to the music. Just get up and move around!

## 11. It's All About Having Fun!

Make sure you enjoy whatever activities you choose. Try new things. Get out and play.

## 12. Go as Far as You Can See...

...and when you get there, you will see further. Start with small goals and when you accomplish these, set larger ones.

## 13. If it Sounds Like Sontan Lotion...

...that's where it belongs. Tropical oils such as palm oil, coconut oil and palm kernel oil are high in saturated fat and tend to increase blood cholesterol levels.

## 14. Small Changes, Big Benefits

Drink one cup of skim milk instead of whole milk. Eat an English Muffin instead of a donut, and walk for 20 minutes. Do this every day and lose ½ lb. in a week. That's more than 20 lbs. in a year!

## 15. Get Your Engine Running

Eating a healthy breakfast not only helps you manage your weight but it fuels your muscles and feeds your brain. Research shows it improves concentration and problem solving ability.

## 16. Count Your Blessings and Your Steps

Did you know that if you take 2,500 steps, you will have walked approximately one mile and burned between 100 and 125 calories?

## 17. Flex Your Muscles

Strength training increases your strength and your balance. It reduces body fat and increases lean body mass and metabolic rate.

## 18. Flashback to Childhood

Football, kickball, volleyball... They are a lot more fun than running on a treadmill. And, team sports build confidence, foster friendships and help us stay in shape.