



It's no secret that most American families are lacking the proper amount of physical activity. According to the latest figures from the National Center for Health Statistics, one in six adolescents ages 12 to 19 were overweight in the United States in 2003-2004, more than triple the rate in 1976-1980. Family support has been a key factor identified to encourage physical fitness among children, according to the Surgeon General.

The key to getting your kids out of the house and moving about is creating a routine that is both fun and challenging. Most children drop out of sports because it ceases to be fun, there is too much emphasis on winning, or there is lack of parental involvement. Choosing an activity such as martial arts is perfect for families looking for a challenging way to stay in shape and learn new skills together without putting too much emphasis on competition.

The best way for parents to become positive role models for their children and encourage them to become involved in physical activities, is to become involved themselves. Moms, dads and kids who exercise together, plan better eating choices, and adopt a healthier family lifestyle are more likely to have greater bonding, better relationships and overall improved health.

Martial arts is a perfect opportunity for parents and kids to learn a skill together and experience an activity that is strong in learning, recreation and family bonding, all at the same time. There's nothing like mutual encouragement when it comes to an activity that requires discipline. Martial arts can provide continuous challenges for families to pursue together for years to come.

Data for 2003-2004: Ogden, Cynthia, Carroll, Margaret, Curtin, Lester, McDowell, Margaret, Tabak, Carolyn, and Flegal, Katherine. "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in the United States, 1999-2004." JAMA, 295 (13): 1549-1555.

You may be on the right track, but if you just sit there, you'll be run over. — Unknown

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