



Want to bond with your children? Here are some sporting activities for dads and kids



Making sport and exercise fun

You could bore your children rigid talking about your sporting prowess back in the day - or you could play some sport with them today.

It is easy to end up playing computer games with your child or being an armchair expert on TV sports, but the stand-out memories for them when they're parents themselves, looking back on their childhood, will be the times you got off the sofa and played some sports together. Make the time to play some sport or games this week and you are guaranteed to feel better in both body and spirit. Getting active with your children works for all of you on so many levels: the adrenaline-pumping joy of racing each other on bikes; one-on-one time to chat, laugh, tease each other and catch up in a relaxed way while you're playing; the opportunity to teach the important stuff like being a good and bad loser, supporting each other, not giving up and the pride of doing something to the best of your ability and succeeding.

We have some great suggestions for sports to play with your children:

1. Field Games

From crawling age, your child might be intrigued by a ball. By the time they're toddle-running, and if they've continued to gravitate towards a ball, you can be teaching them how to throw, kick and catch. You're the role model, so you can show them how to be relaxed - and hopefully skilled - playing ball sports and enjoying hours of fun together. As they get older - and always taking your cue from their enthusiasm - you can sign them up for weekend football or rugby classes and even volunteer to be a coach. The same is true for any sport: inspire some early interest, take a supporting role in a club or continue learning alongside him or her and share the memories together.

2. Get the bikes and go cycling

Watching your child pedal off solo for the first time on their bike will certainly be a real "proud dad moment", but for more father child bonding, nothing beats a long (and preferably muddy) bike ride in the countryside. Cycling on roads can be nerve-racking with and for children, but cycling trails away from traffic can be a chance to really relax and enjoy family time. Online you can find an array of suggestions for different family bike rides.



3. Tennis

Kids' tennis racquets are so light nowadays that from the age of three or four, you can be throwing balls to your child and teaching them to 'back and smack'. Like any sport, be prepared to put the time in if you are looking for a future tennis partner.

4. Wrestling - the fun kind

Rough housing, rough and tumble, play fighting, rowdy games, whatever you call it, it's great fun for you and your kids. Children who enjoy rough and tumble with their dads learn the difference between boisterous fun and angry aggression, have a trusting relationship and are better able to be sociable and independent.

5. Climbing

Mountaineering, trad climbing, bouldering, top rope climbing, free solo climbing - just some of the types of indoor and outdoor climbing you could try with your children. Check online to find climbing centres and events near you and around the UK.

6. Orienteering

Orienteering requires navigational skills using a map and compass to navigate from a starting point to a designated end point, usually in unfamiliar surroundings, whilst moving at speed. Work as a team to get to the end point before the other teams or the clock catch up with you!

7. Grab your trainers and go running

Running or jogging is simple enough (not to mention free!) that you can start the habit with your kids from a young age. If they don't fancy picking up the pace the first time you head out, why not start off with a brisk walk and perhaps build up the training to eventually take on a 5k together. Check out the Parkrun website to find organised 5k events near you.

8. Get out on the river

Getting into a boat is a wonderful way to create child-dad bonding memories. Book yourselves onto canoeing starter sessions to give you a chance to dip your toes in the water (!) and there are also guided tours so you can enjoy an adventure without stressing about being solely responsible for your child in an unknown waterway.



For more articles on how to get moving with your kids, visit the #BackOnTrack hub on the Huffington Post.