



1. Join a gym

Is anyone else overusing “family movie nights”? Replace some of them with “family gym nights,” when Mom and Dad get some exercise and the whole family enjoys the indoor pool together.

2. Take a hike

Spending quality time enjoying God’s creation is good for our family relationships, good for our bodies, and good for our souls.

3. Clean up your yard

Speaking for my own family, **yard work** is something that always needs to be done, but it’s usually at the bottom of our “most wanted” things to do. I’ve been recently amazed to realize that my kids’ attitude toward this chore is usually a reflection of my own. (Imagine that!) When I direct them and then enthusiastically join them in the work, they respond with enthusiasm in kind.

4. Serve as a family

Service opportunities abound in most communities. Consider how your family can serve together in a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or veterans’ hospital. You might also clean up your neighborhood roads together, or **do some evangelism** on a well-traveled corner downtown.

5. Go to the library

Instead of reserving this for **homeschool field trips** or rainy days, take dad along one evening a week and make it a family activity.

6. Get creative

Challenge your kids to write a play, complete with songs and instrumental background music (using their own live music they compose and/or perform, or recordings of their choice). Encourage them to let their imaginations run free with scenery, props, and even costumes.

7. Visit (or adopt) a grandparent

Extended family relationships are so important! Make a habit of developing closer ties with grandparents. If grandparents aren't close by, visit a nursing home or ask your pastor for the name of a shut-in who would appreciate developing a relationship with your family.

8. Have family reading time

My kids don't adore reading the way their mother does, but they seem to enjoy it more when it's a family activity instead of a parental command. You may want to choose a read-aloud, or simply have each individual read their own books.

9. Allow for boredom

Contrary to popular household belief, you are not Entertainer-in-Chief. While it's good to provide opportunities for kids to be active and productive, don't fall into the trap of over-scheduling their lives. Sometimes the best way to free kids from a screen habit is to simply take screens away and leave kids to their own (un-electronic) devices.

10. Teach stillness

We need to train our kids that it's okay to be still. To sit quietly and look out the window in the car, instead of expecting to watch a movie on the vehicle's DVD player. To sit on the couch and spend a quiet fifteen minutes simply thinking. To listen to music for a while and let your imagination create a story or a scene or a mood. We teach these truths with our words and with our actions, so it's important to evaluate the way we spend (or misspend) our time as adults.

Breaking a screen habit can be difficult, but it's not impossible! Ask God for wisdom, get the whole family on board, and then get started making room in your schedule (and your heart!) for better things.