



Heart Smart Fun!

Looking for a way to say, "I love you" to your kids or grandkids this Valentine's Day? How about a way that is better than candy, and improves their grumpy winter doldrums? Get the kids off the couch and do something active that is good for your heart and theirs. Kids are always hungry for attention, so play!

If it is too cold to go outside sledding, skiing, skating, snow shoeing or looking for animal tracks in the snow, get off the couch and do heart smart activities inside.



Active Indoor Fun

Before you start, store away any precious or breakable items around the house. These are indoor activities that your family may enjoy:

- ♥ **Hearty Ball Tag** – Use a small heart-shaped beanbag, balled up sock, or stuffed animal for the ball. The person who is "It" throws the ball to tag another. Once a person is tagged, they are "It." Keep playing until everyone needs to "catch their breath."
- ♥ **Indoor Soccer** – Two or more people can play this. Use a small (about 5-6") sponge or stuffed ball with vinyl covering that does not go more than a few feet when kicked. One person defends the goal (refrigerator or piece of furniture) while the others try to kick the ball to hit the goal.
- ♥ **Balloon Volleyball** – Use a balloon for the ball and a couch for the net. Alternatively, you could tie a string from one chair back to another creating a net line in the middle of the room. Teams hit the balloon back and forth across the "net."
- ♥ **Indoor Snowball Fight** – Create "snowballs" by wadding paper into balls. Each team picks a side of the room and gets an equal number of "snowballs." Start throwing!



These activities are sure to increase your heart rate, which is good for your health. Do not stress about competing, just enjoy the fun and enjoy each other. Time together is a fantastic way to speak love and these indoor activities are good for your heart (in many ways)!

Resources:

1. Fitness, Nebraska Extension: <http://food.unl.edu/fitness>
2. Making Physical Activity a Part of a Child's Life, CDC: <https://bit.ly/2THrE8x>

Health Benefits of Active Play:

- Improved mood
- Less stress
- Sharper thinking
- Stronger muscles
- Healthier blood flow
- Enhanced coordination
- Better balance

Family Fun on the Run is a monthly newsletter designed to help families add physical activity to their already hectic schedules.

For more information check out Family Fun on the Run:

<http://go.unl.edu/familyfun>

Jamie Goffena originally authored this article. It has been peer-reviewed.