

Do you or your children have cabin fever? Get outside and play!

By Tracy Martin-Turgeon



What we do when it gets cold

When the cold hits, the snow starts to pile up, and daylight hours are limited, we tend to hibernate like bears and then get cabin fever from being indoors for too long. The challenge is that people have thought this way for the past two decades. There is a reason for the term “The Great Outdoors”. Weather is only a barrier if you don’t have the appropriate clothes to wear. Get up, get out, and get motivated!

What studies show about outdoor time

Studies show that if children spend time outdoors it enhances their imagination, improves attention span, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. Children today are spending half as much time outside than they did twenty years ago. Childhood obesity has doubled in children 6 to 11 years old and in adolescents’ ages 12-19 it has tripled. All that is needed is an hour a day of moderate physical activity, this is the minimum requirement. Public schools have also decreased outdoor time. Thirty years ago children were offered three times per day to stretch and exercise their bodies. The opportunity for frequent outdoor play has been drastically reduced. Children are not going outside at home and only for a very small time, especially during the winter months, at school. Cabin fever will set in.

What to do

Beat the cold, don’t make excuses, get up, get outside and get some fresh air!

Some things you can do are;

- Fill a bottle with water and food coloring and draw in the snow. See how many pictures you can make?
- Don’t have a sled; use a cardboard box or a plastic bag and slide, slide, slide.
- Look for rabbit tracks, deer, squirrel, and bird prints in the snow.
- Build a snowman and go outside each day and change his/her appearance. People driving by will love to see what your snowman is wearing each day.
- Build a miniature luge track. Have kids use metal spoons to carve parallel tracks in the snow. They can race spoons, rubber balls, or acorns. Kids will have fun with this.
- Go snowshoeing. You don’t need to go out and buy snowshoes. All you need is shoebox, folded newspaper, or tree branches. Attach to boots with string or rubber bands and go for a walk around your favorite areas in the snow.

- Think beyond snowmen - expand on your imagination and build a car or favorite animal.
- Go to a playground! They are not just for spring and summer. Swing, go down a slide.
- Build a fort out of twigs.
- Collect rocks and bring inside to paint.

The activities are endless and remember what it was like to be a child. Don't let technology take over your child's imagination. Go outside and explore, get some fresh air, and exercise remember you only need one hour a day. I guarantee you are going to like it.