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Make Exercise Fun Again

By: **Kate Parham**

Remember when we were kids and spent our days running around outside, playing games, coming in to rest only when our mothers rang the dinner bell?

Okay, maybe the bell was something I saw in an old movie. The point is: we *totally* exhausted ourselves, but we didn't call it exercise. It was fun!

Fast-forward to the real world where the drudgery of gym workouts leads to burn-out, and slogging away hours on home equipment like a treadmill feels more like hamster torture than an endorphin release.

It doesn't have to be that way.

You can get in a great workout without feeling like you're working out... you just have to be creative. And thanks to some truly unique companies, it's getting even easier to get some cardio, burn calories and tone muscles without spending hours at the gym.

Check out these innovative and -- best of all -- fun exercises:

Trampoline Workouts: Jumping on a trampoline is a great cardio workout. In fact, just 10 minutes is equivalent to running for 30 minutes. Not to mention that anyone can do it. A trampoline workout helps build endurance without high-impact stress -- the trampoline absorbs 80 percent of the shock of jumping, protecting your joints while exercising your muscles. Jumping can even help reduce back aches! And it's a great activity for the whole family. Check out Skyzone Sports, a family-friendly trampoline fitness center where 3-D Dodgeball games help people get fit and have fun.


Or try trampoline exercises at home with Springfree Trampoline, the (self-proclaimed) safest trampoline on the market. It's designed without the impact areas that cause injury on traditional trampolines (like springs). Celebrity trainer Kathy Kaehler has teamed up with the company to provide at-home trampoline fitness regimens that are as fun as they are effective.

Obstacle Courses And Races: Adults just got a new playground. Indoor and outdoor obstacle courses like Patch Fitness help participants get a great workout without spending hours at the gym.


Inspired by obstacle course endurance training used by the United States Military, these courses--which combine cardio, strength and flexibility training--make you feel like a kid again. You can even purchase your own course to set up at home.

There are also 5K obstacle course races across the country, like Obstacle Apocalypse, which includes over 14 military-style obstacles. You haven't lived until you've tried the Fire Jump and their extreme version of the classic Slip-and-Slide.


Another fun race for adults is the Metroathlon, the ultimate adult obstacle course playground. It takes place on a football-sized field where competitors sprint through a challenging course featuring 30 obstacles such as tire flips, rope swings, cargo net climbs, wall jumps, and monkey bars. You can even invite your friends to do team races.



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Kate Parham is a Washington D.C.-based freelance writer who reports on food, nutrition, travel and lifestyle topics. Her work has been published in dozens of consumer magazines and online including *USA Today*, *Real Simple*, *Self*, *Cooking Light* and countless others. More about Kate at KateParham.com.

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