

BROOKLYN_BORN

Change Banner Image

151,885
SparkPoints



- Info
- Photos
- Feed
- Blogs
- Awards
- More

Remember When Exercise was FUN?

Tuesday, May 04, 2021



Recently there has been a lot of nostalgia about our childhood foods particularly how companies have been using those memories to sell us those same "comfort foods" during the pandemic.

What I love most about Spark connections is realizing how different our childhoods were depending on where we lived while growing up. Yet here we are all together on the same journey, paying attention to our diet and exercise.

Regardless of our daily diet, there was no need to "track our steps" in childhood. It wasn't exercise. We were just having fun.



This photo wasn't MY childhood. These are 3 of our 6 grandchildren some years ago. They are now 23, 20 and 19.

So many Sparkers described their childhood family gardens and fruit trees, even orchards. I saw that life only on TV. None of that was possible in our 3 room apartment in Brooklyn. I did have a brief glimpse of it during the summer at Grandma's house in a rural town in PA

The picture below is MY childhood. I remember a different kind of exercise "fun" An older teenager would open the fire hydrants for us to cool off in the street.

[Add a Blog Entry](#)

See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts

More Blogs by BROOKLYN_BORN

[Life in the Middle of the Road](#) - 5/7/2021

[How Nostalgia Hooks Us to Buy Junk Food \(Sharing a great blog\)](#) - 5/1/2021

["The Old and the Clueless?" Thank you all for your support](#) - 4/30/2021

[A lesson in "Functional Fitness" - At least I didn't burn the house down.](#) - 4/27/2021

[View All >](#)



We must have burned a lot of calories jumping around in the spray and getting out of the way of cars. Eventually the police would come and turn off the water.

Our children and grandchildren are all great swimmers because their childhoods allowed for lessons even swim teams. Not so in my childhood.

The few city pools were off limits because of the polio epidemic. By the time vaccines provided protection, I preferred to take the subway to the beach. Jumping through the waves was fun and unintended exercise, but it wasn't possible to learn to swim in that environment.

Still, once upon a time movement was FUN. When did it change to something that is so often described as drudgery or something we hate to do? Can we recapture the spirit we once had as children?

How did you have FUN in childhood while getting your exercise?
Can you recapture any of that today?
Can we find some kind of movement that gives us joy?

As always, we learn most from each other's comments.
There is a lot of wisdom in our shared Spark World.

Obviously, we expect age and life changes to set limits.
Unlikely former gymnasts are still taking a turn on the balance beam as senior citizens, but maybe still dancing?

Edit: In answer to OKM's question - I learned to swim at age 28 after I had 3 children.
I figured if I was MAKING them take swim lessons, I should model that behavior.
I joined a non-swimmers adult class. There were 16 of us and I was the only one who had never even tried to float or put my face in the water. Probably for the best I had no bad habits to unlearn so I did exactly as I was instructed and learned 3 strokes. (free, back and breast). Now I can swim nearly a continuous mile. At least I could pre-pandemic.

Share This Post With Others

[Report Inappropriate Blog](#)

Member Comments About This Blog Post



SYNCHRODAD

What an excellent blog! Even more excellent (if possible) are the comments. I read all of them. Many memories of mine triggered. I am asking myself at the moment, "What do I do that is fun? And exercise. Can't run anymore, that is for sure. I think I have to embrace some yardwork for starters. What on my eternal to-do list is fun or that I can make it fun? I'm thinking.

17 hours ago



PHATPAT18

We had a pool and it was so much fun.

22 hours ago



ELIZABETHBECK1

Great blog! I try to make my workouts fun and not drudgery! I REFIT@ bike, walk, run new trails, hike, swim, and do water aerobics. I garden and clean up the yard as often as I can, I try new workouts and change things up as often as I can. Impromptu pick up games of Volleyball or basketball? I'm down! I even make cleaning fun by turning up the music and dancing while I clean. Again, thanks for posting!

22 hours ago



IZIPPYC

We rode bikes everywhere in my youth. Back then safer streets. I'd ride a mile from home to go to a fave little store. Even walked back and forth to school, which wasn't fun. But at least I never had a weight problem back then. Played kickball in the neighborhood road with neighbors kids too. Swimming was fun off and on to different places.

Now, I only have fun exercising when I'm walking in nature. I don't like the heat or sweating though. 🙄

I got back on my bike for the first time in 15 years 4 years ago, only to wreck it. At my age, with osteopenia- hung up the two wheeler, especially after I broke my shoulder in a fall 2 years ago. I enjoy my chair exercises and stretching. Really makes me feel good.

1 day ago



-TITANIUM-

My childhood was very different than most. My best exercise was running away from the spanking and abuse. My sister taught me how to ride a bike .. I was able to get away faster and go farther.

1 day ago



LYNCHD05

There isn't much we didn't do as long as we were outside. I remember freezing my feet when skating way too long in the freezing prairie winters. Summers were all the usual, biking, swimming, baseball, skipping. We never played in the house.

Who worried about kids being gone all day in that era.

1 day ago



WEDDWT

Loved rope skipping, especially double dutch

1 day ago



RETIREDSUE

I learned to swim in a high school pool in the city where I took lessons and enjoyed swimming into my teens and young adulthood although I was never a strong swimmer. Growing up in a city suburb, although I played outside in our safe cul-de-sac and ran around the neighbourhood with the other kids, I was usually more content to play with dolls inside or read a book than I was to play outdoors. When I was in my teens, living in a much smaller community, if I wanted to go almost anywhere I walked. Walking was a big part of my life for years - until I had my own car as a young adult. It's something I still enjoy but I'm mostly a "fair weather" walker unless I have somewhere to go specifically that is within walking distance, when I will set out regardless of the weather. My fun exercise these days is doing Pahla B videos which seem to be helping me maintain and even lose

a bit more to get to that 'magic' number!

1 day ago



MELOBEE

All the neighborhood kids would get together and play outside until dinnertime any type of ball





sports, bicycling, Buckeye fights--I grew up in Ohio--etc. I also remember a show on TV at the time called Lucy's Toyshop (?) where she would make exercise fun to do by singing the "Chicken Fat" song. Those were the days, lol.

1 day ago



PRIMEOFMYLIFE

Everyone should learn how to swim! We have drownings every summer in our local lakes - so tragic and preventable. I love the water parks that have been created for kids. Good clean fun, and exercise!



1 day ago



PHOENIX81RISING

Love this blog post! So many things in life are now tainted with pressure and expectation. We



have to try and re-adapt to make things fun, again.

1 day ago



BONIFIANT

My childhood fun - cartwheels in the back yard, bike riding (who could ride the farthest with out holding the handlebars), hop scotch, and stilt walking. When we could go to the park it was the jungle gym and monkey bars. Oh, I forgot - skipping rope. I was the "tomboy" in a dress.

1 day ago



GRAMPIAN



Such memories.

1 day ago



TKLBRIDGET1

I grew up in New York, but out in the country. We would play baseball until dark, play hide and seek with the neighbor kids, dance for hours listening to the record player in my friend's basement and walk all around the neighborhood. It was never exercise it was just having fun. Sometimes I think the kids today miss out because they play so much with their electronics and don't get



outside as much. Thanks for bringing back some happy memories!

2 days ago



SUSANBEAMON

I spent my childhood either on Army bases or in small towns. The polio vaccine came when I was 5, so it didn't inhibit our play that much. I learned to swim at school. I went to a private school for a few years. I remember running all over the neighborhood. When I got a bike, I expanded that to all over town. Just be home for dinner.

2 days ago



DIANEDOESSMILES

Lived in the city also as a kid, though there were a few places that were big enough to do things. There was a huge hill by the boys reformatory, there was a sign that said "DO NOT ENTER" but, it was a low income area where we lived at that time. So we pretended to not see it. It was GREAT for SLIDING!! It took almost 3 minutes to go down it,, and you stopped on the RIVER!! LOL if the river wasn't frozen you TRIED to stop before it, or you simply better know how to swim! LOL

0.+

Summer was typical of many you played games in the streets, on the playground. In some yards, many in houses (I HATE HATE HATE BARBIE!! ALWAYS HAVE!).

As a teenager though we had moved to a very good part of another city with a huge yard, I became a teen there, and wasn't interested in such games. I did do gymnastics and that's was SUPER FUN, but also serious. I still did roller skate and did that into my early 20's. In my 30's tried rollerblading, for fun. Life is still,, fun just as adults it's called "exercise" but not when I am having fun. It's still,, fun.

2 days ago

Comment edited on: 5/5/2021 11:51:06 PM



MSMOSTIMPROVED

I was one of those water babies that learn to swim at 6 months at the YMCA. I've been in love with swimming ever since. I wish I had a pool closer so I could do more water sports.

2 days ago



JUNETTA2002

We had so much fun as kids

2 days ago



MTN_KITTEN



We road our bikes, walked or ran every where we went. We played different sports as a group at the end of our street. We lived "in" the city but we were the last street next to a kajillion acre cattle ranch ... so we ran with the cows.

We owned a boat and summer weekends were spent at the lake.

Ahhh ... so much fun. Huh ... we were exercising???

2 days ago



COUNTRYGALINNY



I grew up in the country so had access to swimming, skiing, biking, hiking. I spent the weekend with family. They kids played nonstop. Yes, they were active, not exercising. Why does that change as an adult?

2 days ago



KELLIEBEAN



Wonderful blog. My mom was too afraid of the water to let us learn to swim. But we rode our bikes all over, well as far as my nervous mom would let us anyway, to the schoolyard down the street or to the park about six blocks away and back. It felt like all over at the time.



My sisters and I pretended we were cab drivers to and from Chicago's O'hare airport. The house at the end of the block had a large driveway, so that was the airport.



We took tennis lessons for a while from the very cute Polynesian park district employee. I practiced against the wall of our apartment building. I remember one day hitting the ball against the wall singing Petula Clark's Downtown. Don't know why. That memory always gives me a chuckle.

It's been a looooooong time since I tried to play tennis but I do still enjoy bike riding!

Thanks for the trips down memory lane.

2 days ago



ISNESS



The goal is to become a child again. 😊
It might even take the weight loss stress away.

I had an over-protective mother; it was at the age of 10, when I learned to swim quite the rough way and some kid pushed me into the deep water. Perhaps that's why I still dislike the depths.

I enjoyed your story with a motivational message. Dobry den, Elenka!

2 days ago



ITICITIC



I don't know why it stopped being fun, but as a kid in the suburbs we were always (as I recall it) in motion. If we weren't at school or stuck in the house doing homework, chores or the dreaded practice for music lessons, the neighborhood kids were on the go--tag, hide and seek, pick-up soccer games, swinging, climbing on monkey bars, bike riding--it didn't seem to matter what, as long as we were moving. I can't remember the weather ever diminishing our desire to be outside and active. At school, recess was filled with skipping and running games, and sitting still for hours was a form of torture. I can still close my eyes and remember the exhaustion when we'd finally flop down on the grass in the dusk, just before we were called inside for the night. Our muscles felt totally limp, as if even the effort to sit up would be too much, but somehow it was a good feeling. Sleeping was never a problem.

As a teen, after we'd moved to a city, my group of friends would sometimes "miss" the bus on purpose and choose to walk 3+ miles home instead. Today I can't imagine deciding to do that.

2 days ago



KITTYHAWK1949



I really never learned to swim even though my mom took me for swimming lessons at YMCA a few summers. Not afraid of the water even after almost drowning. But I did learn to float and dog paddle at summer camp with the help of a friend. Water aerobics are my favorite exercise but not gone in over a year due to pandemic. Soon will be fully vaccinated and plan to go again at gym. My other childhood exercise was riding my bike so maybe that is why I prefer exercise bike to walking or other equipment.



2 days ago

**ETHELMERZ**

Lived in a farm house, on the edge of a small town, could ride our bikes all over, roller skate all over, from one end to the other. Play in the school yards, no fences. Rode bikes out into the country, no fear.

As we got older, rock and roll got us hooked to dance. Did chores at home. Could walk to the library and check out books anytime we wanted. Of course, was a lot lower population back then.
2 days ago

**THOMS1**

I remember when I was young and exercise was fun but as I grow older I enjoy the gym machine exercises and walking more. I also remember going to the park everyday because mother and dad owned a Dry Cleaners and the park was our babysitter. It was ok but, everyday? There were summer programs to take part in and that was ok. I didn't like softball so I went for the crafts and made a lot of pot holders and leather necklaces. It was nice when we were old enough to stay home alone of course then there were a lot of chores to do. At least we learned a good work ethic



and how to keep a clean house.
2 days ago

**INCH_BY_INCH**

2 days ago

**RACHNACH**

2 days ago

**4EVERDIETER**

As long as we were outside playing, Mom did our house cleaning chores for us. If we came inside she put us to work. Fun times! My parents didn't seem to care how far we roamed as long as we were back in our own yard by the time the street lights came on.
2 days ago

**OVERWORKEDJANET**

My, such great answers!

I was a tree climber, multiple mile walker and biker. In my teens I became a stall-keeper and horse rider.
It was all routine, not exercise!
2 days ago

**THINCPL2004**

The most important thing, is that you are moving! And I think that's amazing that you can swim almost a mile most people can't do that! So kudos!
2 days ago

**QUEENFROG**

I loved bike riding and I still love bike riding.
2 days ago

**AZMOMXTWO**

I remember play headlights we ran around and hid when a car came so that we were not seen no harm was ever done but we did hit the ditch a lot on a busy night
2 days ago

**AMYG5025**

This is a great perspective! I think about this a lot because my younger son is so resistant to getting outside or doing physical activity. So I'm often trying to think about what would be fun for him. Even if it isn't as heart pumping as what would be ideal, doing SOMETHING is better than doing NOTHING! I remember as a kid having so much fun riding my bike, hiking through the woods near our house, swimming at the lake and building sand castles at the ocean, swinging on the swings, playing jumprope... So many things! Thanks for letting us all take a trip down memory



lane.
2 days ago

**HAYBURNER1969**

You know what I currently find fun? Walking to work. If it were safer to do (instead of walking on a no-sidewalk, 55 mph 2-lane highway with a small shoulder), I'd do it every day. That's one thing I prefer about a city - not being dependent on a car... being able to walk everywhere.
2 days ago






RHOOK20047

When I was a child I had two past times - riding my bike and playing baseball. We had a huge back yard when I was a child, big enough to make a ball field and an open field behind our house. So the day was mostly spent on our bikes going around the different neighborhoods where my friends from school lived. We would ride for hours. On good weather days we would have a baseball game in the evening. Even though there was a park just blocks away from where I lived, we would have our neighborhood games. This memory brought a smile to my face this morning.
2 days ago



SHAKERATTLEROLL

 blog--What make exercise fun but not called exercise?? Anything that you enjoy doing that is moving your body--jogging to the restroom (yep sometimes it running), dancing while doing the dishes, riding bikes in the rain or through the mud puddles, mowing the grass (calms the mind while exercising the body two for one well three if you count mowed grass). Oh there are so many that have not been mentioned so thank you for reminding me of what fun exercises can be.
2 days ago



WALKINTOFIT

I didn't know we were exercising. we played... rode bikes, swam in canals, went to the tennis courts, went to the city pool. climbed trees, played outside till dark. baseball, tetherball, red light green light, during the winter we played fox and geese, built snowmen, sledding down the kid hill by our house, really didn't have adult supervision, oh the freedom we had...
3 days ago



PATRICIAAK

We WALKED to & from school - nearly a mile each way. When I got a bike (age 9), I often rode it instead of walking.
3 days ago



ELISEP5

You brought up a great point, and so many memories I could easily get lost in.



suppose for me its because I can't do that anymore, and I can't do this anymore either,



or

this  lol
3 days ago




PLCHAPPELL

We played outside .
3 days ago




FRITZYS_MAMA

I basically lived outside as a kid...but also did hours upon hours of yoga as a tween and teenager. But still love exercise. 
3 days ago



DSJB9999

Great blog and topic.  Don't remember really much exercising as a child but had to walk to the bus stop and also to school. I also got into swimming when my children had lessons but sadly didn't go to lessons so still don't swim strongly. I have always been proud though when my children pass me in a race as I helped pay for that confidence and skill! I am fitter and healthier now than I have been in the past and really enjoy my 30 mins dumbbells workout in a mornings!



3 days ago




LIS193

Lots of swimming, ice and roller skating, playing outside and biking everywhere. Typical Dutch childhood 😊
3 days ago



RKOTTEK


3 days ago



MARYJEANSL

I'm afraid I pretty much always hated exercise, even as a child. I was always somewhat



overweight, and slow at any physical activity. In gym class, I was always last in races, last to be picked for teams, etc., etc. I always preferred to sit at home and read. The only gym class I ever enjoyed in elementary school was when we learned square dancing. I did enjoy riding my bike - haven't done that in many years.

3 days ago



WHILLSW
Thanks for jogging memories....



3 days ago



PHEBESS
We made up all kinds of games, most of them including some part of exploring the woods behind our first house, or the empty lot (also wooded) behind our house. I wanted to be an archaeologist, so I did a lot of digging for, well, anything. And summers included running through the sprinklers Dad would put out for us in the yard.

I learned to swim at our town's summer recreation program - once or twice a week they'd take us out to the Hudson River, and we had swimming lessons. Yup, the Hudson River in the mid 1960s - SO polluted! I'd develop conjunctivitis every summer, and my mother finally told me to please just swim on my back. That solved the whole problem, though I couldn't see where I was going. I finally learned to swim the crawl when I was in my 20s!!!!

3 days ago



TERMITEMOM
You are right, this was not exercise, but just plain fun. I remember roller skating and riding my bike.

3 days ago



NASFKAB
We played. Hopscotch can be a great exercise I feel cant hop any more. Thank you for bringing back my memories.

3 days ago

Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's [Community Guidelines](#).

Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON

SPELL CHECK

Post Comment

Member Comments Page (99 total):

1 [2](#) [Next >](#)

Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.