

7 Ways to Get Fit on the Playground

Posted by [Cynthia Dermody](#) on June 7, 2010 at 6:57 AM



I'm often at the gym at 9 p.m. at night, not because that's my [ideal time to work out](#). Uh, if I didn't go then, I'd never go. It's all my kids' fault. I never have any time. That's what we all love to say.

The other day, I took my kids to the playground after dinner to work off some energy. Turns out, I had a lot of energy, too, and did something I haven't done in 20 years: I jumped on the monkey bars.

I'm a wimpy arm person. It was not easy. Thankfully, we were the only ones there, because it was quite embarrassing.

Then I monkeyed again. And again and again. The next day, my biceps, triceps, and shoulders were killing me. It was as though I'd just come off a session with a trainer.

So I started to think about some of the other moves I could do while my children ran around like lunatics. For one, I could be a lunatic, too.

Playing "monster" and chasing the kids will kick your butt. Run up the slide, down the fireman's pole, over the swinging bridge, up and down the rope ladder, and shimmy through impossibly small openings -- all these things equal sweat and burn (and a few bruises, but oh well). Plus your kids will think you're the coolest mom ever for playing like them ... so I was told.

Tara Zimilki, a personal trainer and founder of [Tara's Bootcamp](#), is a mom of two young daughters who discovered what I did. She's developed a "playground workout" for moms to maximize their time at the playground, including the monkey bars and some additional ideas as well:

The Swing set

Perfect for stability and core exercises. Try a one-leg squat with one foot in the seat of the swing. Target your abs by sitting on the swing and leaning back about 45 degrees. Hold your legs straight out in front of you and cross them over one another in a "scissor" motion.

Park benches

Target your shoulders and triceps with a bench dip. Place your hands on the edge of the bench seat and your feet angled in front of you. Lower yourself off the bench with your hands until your elbows are at about a 90-degree angle, and lift back up.

Jungle Gym

While your kids play on the jungle gym, use it to strengthen your arms with a standing push-up. The farther back you stand from the gym, the harder the push-ups become.

Strollers

- Use for support or added resistance for lunges and squats
- Run -- do intervals to ramp up your workout

Do you work out at the park while your kids play?