Weight-bearing Relay (30 minutes)

Items needed for this activity:
• stopwatch or timer

Activity set up:
• You will need lots of space for this activity
• Designate a relay area. Mark a starting line on one side and on the other side, mark the turning point with an “x.”

Step 1: Information to share with club members (5 minutes) (Source: www.nih.gov)
Does anyone here have any grandmothers or grandfathers who have recently broken a bone or who have gotten shorter as they’ve grown older? Did you know that those family members may have a condition called “osteoporosis,” which means that their bones don’t have enough calcium and other minerals. Without these nutrients, bones can break very easily.

A number of things are important for building your bones and teeth when you’re young and for keeping them strong all through life. We’re going to talk about two of these things, can you guess what they are? I’ll give you some hints: We do one at every meeting. The other begins with the letter C. Can anyone guess? (Take guesses). That’s right! The first is physical activity and the other is calcium!

In order to keep our bones strong, we need to do what is called weight-bearing physical activity, which is when your body works against gravity. That happens when your feet, legs, or arms are carrying most of your weight. Bones are living tissues in our bodies, and when we do weight-bearing activities, it causes new bone tissue to form, making them stronger! Bones also become stronger when muscles push and tug against them during physical activity. What do you think some examples of weight-bearing activities are? (Guide them to the following responses: running, walking, hopping, jumping, skipping, basketball, soccer, baseball, jump rope, hopscotch, jumping jacks, push-ups, dancing climbing stairs, handstands, cartwheels, lifting weights). Those were some great ideas!

Another way to keep bones strong is by getting enough calcium. Calcium is a mineral that builds strong healthy bones and teeth and keeps them strong all throughout life. Where do we get calcium? (Guide them to food and drinks, especially milk and milk products). That’s right. Milk products – milk, yogurt, and cheese – are the best dietary sources of calcium. However milk products aren’t the only sources of calcium! Some people have trouble digesting milk products and others choose not to consume them. So some companies add calcium to foods. These are called calcium-fortified foods and others choose not to consume them. So some companies add calcium to foods. They can be fortified to contain calcium. Another way to get calcium is by eating non-dairy foods that have smaller amounts of calcium than milk products. For example, dark-green leafy vegetables such as broccoli and spinach, cooked dried beans like soybeans, and almonds all contain calcium. Now, how much calcium do we need? Well, a good rule to remember is the American Dairy Association’s “3-a-day” rule of dairy. You need to eat three servings a day of low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese to make sure you...
are getting all the calcium your body needs! That’s easy enough, right?!

Step 2: Group Activity 1 (15 minutes)
So now that we know what makes our bones healthy and strong, let’s put it into action! In a little bit, we are going to be doing a relay where each person is going to do a different weight-bearing activity. But first, we all need to practice each one!

Everybody is going to learn and practice the five different activities we will be doing in the relay. The first one is skipping! Does everyone know how to skip?? (Pick a youth to demonstrate how to skip). The next one is jumping jacks! Here is how you do a jumping jack. (Pick another youth to show jumping jacks). The third one is galloping. Can someone show us how to gallop? (Pick another youth to show galloping). Then, we have hopping on one foot. (Pick a youth to demonstrate). And finally, jumping with two feet. (Pick a youth to demonstrate). Very good! Those were excellent demonstrations!

(Have all youth form a row on one side of the room. Make sure the area is clear, as they will be moving to the other side of the room). Now, we are all going to do these activities together for two minutes each! When I say “Go!” you will do the activity I say back and forth across the room in a straight line! This isn’t a race! It’s just to get you moving and practicing the different weight-bearing exercises! Be careful not to run into each other!

Ready? The first one we will do is skipping! Go! (Youth will skip back and forth. After two minutes of skipping, stop them!) Great job! You are all great skippers! The next exercise is jumping jacks! Normally we do jumping jacks in place, but for this activity you have to move forward while doing them! Ready, Go! (Youth will do jumping jacks back and forth. Again, stop them after two minutes). Very good! Are you getting tired yet?! The third one is galloping! Ready, Go! (Stop youth after two minutes). We’re almost there! Next we are going to hop on one foot! If you need your other foot for balance once in awhile, that’s okay! Just make sure you are hopping on one foot while you’re going forward! Ready, Go! (Stop members after two minutes). Okay, last one! Now we are going to jump with two feet! No running starts! Ready, Go! (Members will jump with two feet back and forth. Stop them after two minutes.)

Great job everyone! We just did ten minutes of weight-bearing exercise!

Step 3: Group Activity 2 (10 minutes)
Now I want everyone to get into groups of five people! (If you have extra youth, you can make them a group and have some members of that group go more than once. Or you can add them to other relay teams and add an extra weight-bearing activity such as walking or running).

Now that you are in your teams, I have a job for you. For this relay, we want each person on your team to do a different activity. So I want your team to discuss and decide who is going to do what! You will need a skipper, a jumping jack-er, a galloper, a one-foot hopper, and a two-foot jumper! I will give you all one minute to decide! (After one minute, ask each group if they have one person for each activity.) Okay, let’s line up for the relay in this order: skipper, jumping jack-er, galloper, hopper, and jumper. (If you have a small group of 3 or 4, where some members might go more than once, you may have to help them choose activities and line up. Also, if you have a group of 6 where someone will be walking or running, have the first person in the other groups go twice, skipping the first time and walking or running the second time).

Okay, I think we’re ready! On your marks, get set, GO!

(After relay) Great job everyone! We got a lot of physical activity done today! And had a lot of fun doing it! Let’s see which of those five activities you all liked the best. (Take a poll to see which activity was the favorite).

Get Up & Move!