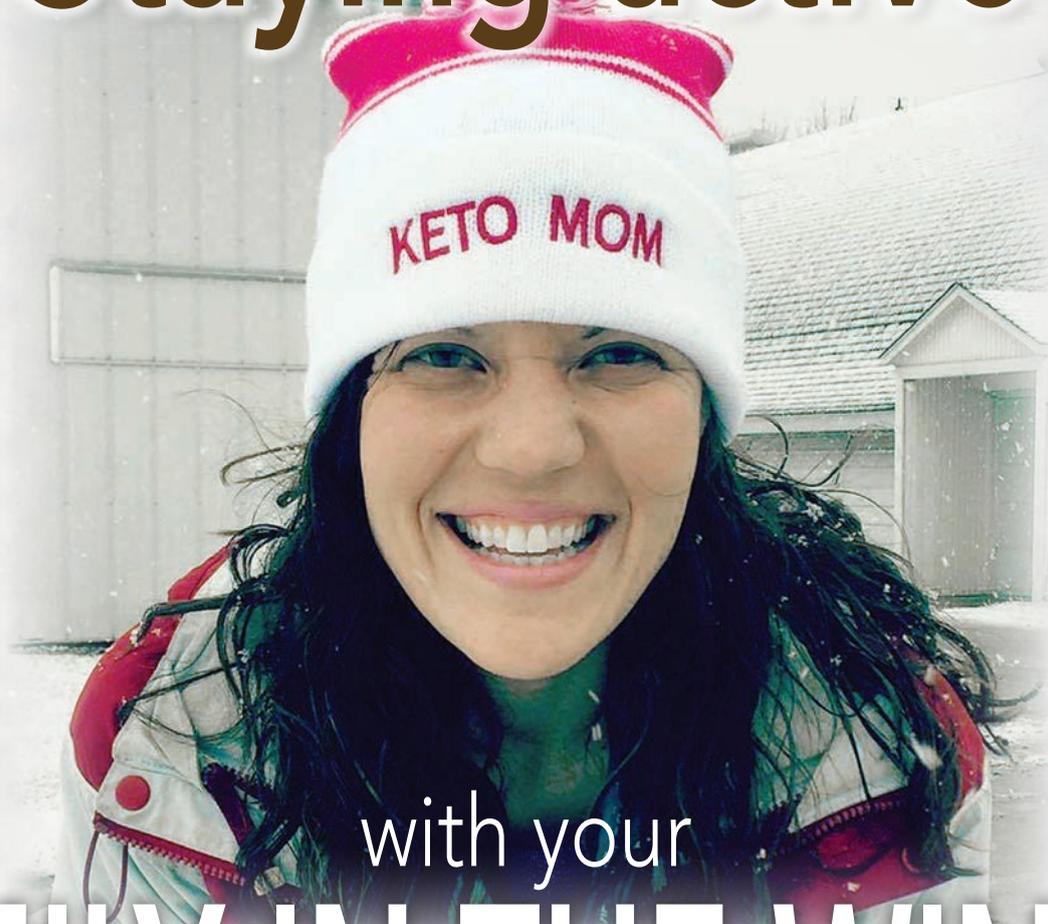


Staying active



with your

FAMILY IN THE WINTER

BY AUTUMN VAN RAVENHORST

It can be tough to appreciate the beauty of winter.

Your free time has been taken by the snow plows, muddy slush in the entry way that was predictably left for you to clean up and trying to properly dress children who have no sense of urgency whatsoever.

Often hidden by white-out conditions and bouts of the flu virus, winter does bring great tidings of joy like the resurrection of fleece leggings which are perfect for curling up on the couch with a warm beverage in hand. It is easy to sink deep into those cushions with no intention of ever leaving, but you know as well as I that you can't do that forever.

Although it can be a trying task, staying active and healthy in the winter indeed has its benefits. It keeps your body on track for the rest of the year and can help beat the winter blues. When it comes to your

family, even the most active children hesitate to head out the door in less-than-desirable temperatures (because they are smart). But what happens when children experience a lack of exercise? They find other ways to release the unused energy that are not so pleasant.

Where do I start? How do I eat? How do I exercise? How do I include my family?

These are all questions Stephanie Mielke of Owatonna gets asked regularly.

Stephanie is a homeschooling mom of four daughters, wife and wellness advocate. She and her husband, Steve, helped launch a company called Pruvit. Pruvit is the company behind a product referred to as Keto OS, a ketone supplement aimed at improving various aspects of your health and wellbeing using the metabolic process of ketosis.

Stephanie can be found on Facebook under the alias "Keto Mom" with a following of more than 40,000 fans.

She regularly promotes their business, offers daily tips and inspiration and, of course, keeps up with their daughters. She is friendly, relat-

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able and focuses on building a supportive community of people, many of them parents, looking to stay or become healthy. For a lot of us, that time is now with the start of a new year.

Stephanie's idea of building a strong and healthy family simply is to do the best you can.

"Obviously everyone drifts," she said. "My husband has always been into health and fitness, loves lifting weights and has generally been a healthy eater. I, on the other hand, was the one to order pizza at midnight, eat whatever I want, feed the kids chicken nuggets and corn dogs. But about two years ago we made the switch. I won't say diet, because choosing better foods and a healthier way of life should be a long-term goal."

Her trick to getting started? Take it slow.

"Choose one thing to work on, then another, and another," she said. "Take baby steps. If you don't, you'll just get frustrated. My goal right now is to wake up in the morning, workout and have some me time. When I do that, I am a much better mom. I have been going six weeks strong and it feels great."

When it comes to staying active with your family, keep it simple. Many families today create schedules that do not promote family time but instead weaken it. The week is packed with extracurricular activities that disrupt dinner which leads to eating fast food and taking the sanity levels to an all-time low. Staying active during the grueling winter months means developing healthy habits. Make it fun and the kids will follow.

"I decided that by the end of this year, I want to be able to do 10 perfect push-ups. My kids found out, and now they practicing with me," Stephanie said.

This is just one example.

In Minnesota, we should be pros at keeping boredom at bay in the winter. Choose activities that you and your family identify with the most. If you aren't much for the outdoors, look for a nearby indoor ice rink or pool. Many hotels offer affordable admission to utilize their facilities.

Located right in the middle of southern Minnesota is a popular enclosed aquatic experience. The Great Serengeti Indoor Water Park at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites near Cabela's in Owatonna brings Africa indoors with trees, a spraying elephant, life-size giraffe and a python body slide. Parents and kids can slide down a hippopotamus or fire through Kilimanjaro, float down the lazy river or shoot a game of water

basketball.

Entertainment centers offering arcades, bowling and laser tag are another great choice.

If you prefer to face the cold and embrace the snow, your options are endless: snowshoeing, skiing, hiking, fatigue biking, sledding, snowball fights, winter sports and laughter. Encourage your kids to go outside, even if only for a little bit. Southern Minnesota is bursting with trails and picturesque landscapes!

Another great way to keep the kids moving is through good old-fashioned hard work. Give them a shovel. Not only will you keep those heart rates up, but you teach values and how to contribute to the family.

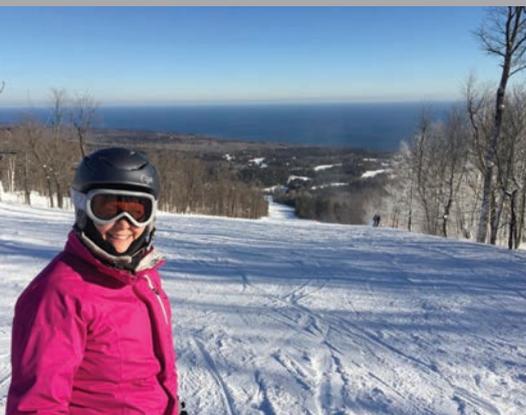
Ultimately, choose the path that is best for your family and don't overcomplicate it.

No matter how simple or complex, staying active and promoting a healthy lifestyle during the winter months is a great way to build memories and bring the family closer together, physically and spiritually. If you haven't established any quite yet, it is never too late to start.

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GET OUT AND ENJOY!



Brenda Christensen



K-W Students Senior Kasey Sviggum Dummer and Riley Sviggum Dummer.

