Sometimes getting to a gym isn't in the cards. I realized my family needed to find ways to integrate movement and exercise into our everyday lives. That’s why I decided to check out Sneaky Fitness, a book by Missy Chase Lapine (of The Sneaky Chef fame) and Larysa DiDio, a fitness expert.

Read on to find out what I thought of this book, and a list of 25 easy indoor exercise ideas that you can do with your kids at home.

The idea behind Sneaky Fitness is that you can find lots of fun ways to trick your kids into exercising (just like the recipes in The Sneaky Chef tricked them into eating vegetables). There’s nothing wrong with the premise; I think anything that helps families get away from the screen and up and moving is great. But I thought that the 100 ideas in the book left something to be desired—especially for city kids who don’t have backyards, big houses or beaches, which often seemed to be assumed.

Perusing the book did inspire me to think of ways I could get my NYC kids moving. So one recent morning, I invited my son to do a little Tupperware bowling in our hallway. After a few throws he was making up his own version of the game, and then another game and another. Before I knew it, I was the one panting and looking sideways at my couch. It was a great lesson, and proved that we didn't need to go to a gym or buy fancy equipment to be less sedentary. It really comes down to a just do it attitude.

So, thanks to Sneaky Fitness, I decided to make my own list of exercise games and activities that we city folk can do, even in small apartments. Some are inspired by Sneaky Fitness, others are games my siblings and I played as kids in our apartment and the rest I invented for my children. They can all be done indoors in your apartment (depending on how comfortable you are with kids playing in your home), in your hallway (if the neighbors are cool) or right outside your building.

Exercising really doesn't need to be a chore and you don't need anything except a willingness to do it. I hope these ideas inspire you to think of your own fun ways to get moving. Share whatever you come up with in the comments.

25 Exercise Games and Activities for Kids

1. **Headstands** – Great for your core muscles and gets blood going to the brain.  
2. **Jump Rope** – If you have downstairs neighbors who complain, go in the hall or right outside your building. To make it more fun, pick up a book of jump-rope rhymes.  
3. **Balloon Ball** – There are endless ways to play with balloons indoors. Try to keep it off the ground or just play catch.  
4. **Wheelbarrow, Crab and Bear-walk Races** – These tough positions mean you get a real workout.  
5. **Animal Races** – Hop like a bunny or a frog, squat and waddle like a duck, etc.  
6. **Obstacle Course** – Create a furniture course in your apartment or take chalk and make a course outside.  
7. **Follow the Leader** – Add to the workout by doing energetic movements like jumping, stomping and squatting.
8. **Dance Party** – Turn on the music and shake your groove thang.
9. **Freeze Dance** – When the music stops, freeze in your pose and hold it until the music starts again.
10. **Scavenger Hunt** – Write up clues and hide them around the apartment. Kids can race to find each clue for a small prize at the end.
11. **Jumping Jacks** – Simple but good for coordination and they get your heart going. When my kids can’t sleep, I make them do 25 to tire them out.
12. **Silly Shakes** – Just like the old Raffi song, shake your sillies out. If you do it long enough, you’ll probably end up in a pile of giggles.
13. **Bubble Wrap Attack** – If you get bubble wrap in the mail, jump on it until it’s all popped.
14. **Clean-Up Race** – Set a timer or put on a song and see who can right the room the fastest.
15. **Tickle Tag** – Chase your children and when you catch them, it’s tickle time.
16. **Temper Tantrum** – Have a fit for the fun of it. Flail, stomp and scream.
17. **Carnival** – Set up carnival games like knock down the milk cans (we used Tupperware).
18. **Hallway Bowling** – Fill up water bottles and use any ball you have.
19. **Hopscotch** – Use chalk or tape to make a game on your floor or outside your building.
20. **Pillow Fight** – No explanation needed.
21. **Sock Skating** – If you have hard floors, put on socks and skate around. See if you can do spins or hockey stops, or who can slide the farthest. Make sure to move the furniture and watch for splinters.
22. **Bubble Bash** – Blow bubbles and let your child try to smash them.
23. **Wrestling** – Put down a mat, or play on a rug or bed. See if your kids can wrestle you to the ground.
24. **Pushover Mom and Pop** – Plant your feet and see if the kids can budge you. If you move your feet, they win. To make it easier for little kids, you can stand on one foot.
25. **Popcorn Pushups** – Put a small bowl of popcorn on the floor. Lower yourself down and stick out your tongue to get a piece of popcorn with each thrust.

Figuring out ways to get the kids moving inside our city apartment is a theme for me. Check out this earlier post on [exercise games that get kids moving for under $20](https://example.com).