Some of us remember racing home afterschool only to tie up our laces and hop on our bikes for full-out physical fun until dinner. We rushed through our meal, so we could catch the last hours of daylight before retiring for the night. We were tired, very tired. We were fit, very fit. We were healthy, very healthy. We made our fun in the woods, on the street and in the backyard. We caught fireflies in jars and watched them light up the night, we made villages with twigs and mud cakes that we tried to feed to our younger siblings. We engaged both physical as well as innovative energy to make up new and exciting games.

What has happened that the streets are empty, the woods no longer resonate with the sounds of 1-2-3 I can see you or “red-rover, red-rover I call Susie over.” Now all you hear is a beep click and ring as our children appear in some sort of electronically induced stupor. They walk like zombies through the house, not even hearing you when you call their name. Their fingers are fit, but the rest of their body is suffering.

So how do we combat the extraordinary advances in technology that have swept our youngsters off their feet like some sort of romantic tale? How do we draw our children away from the screen and back out into the sun? How do we convince them that running sack races and catching crawfish in the stream is more fun that chasing blinking lights on a screen with their fingers? We begin by introducing a mandatory “outside” time each day. A period of time spent outside of the home with no electronics, a sort of electronic-free zone if you will. In addition, we agree to share with them some of our favorite activities that kept us healthy as kids. We actually spend some time with our kids in nature, introducing them to the simplicity of outdoor play. Don’t be afraid to ride bikes, scooter, play hide and seek and act like a kid with your kid. There is no substitute for time spent outdoors and certainly no substitute for time spent with our children. We have to re-introduce our children to the great outdoors. In doing so we reap substantial benefits ourselves. Besides, think about how much fun your kids will have watching you double-dutch or bend over to pick up your hop scotch pebble. Remember, it is ok to be the source of comic relief, go out and have some fun!