



Healthy Habits

Tips and resources for living well



This Month: Getting Active Outside

Healthy tips and ideas! As the weather gets warmer and the days become longer, going outside to exercise is a great way to stay healthy! There are many benefits associated with outdoor fitness, such as improved mood, better ability to manage stress, and increased concentration. In this edition of Healthy Habits, we'll explore these benefits and provide suggestions to help get you outside and get moving!

Fun, simple outdoor activities

Try them today!

Can going for a walk kick your day into high gear? Research shows that even a few minutes outdoors can improve your mood and boost creativity, so try it today. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Walking/Jogging:** Step outside to go for a walk or jog whenever you can! Walking is the easiest form of exercise and it can help improve your overall health.
- **Hiking:** Hiking is a fun way to explore the outdoors while getting some exercise. Need ideas for where to go? Download a hiking app such as MapMyHike.
- **Biking:** If you have a bike, dust it off and go for a ride! Or, rent a bike for a day to help you learn whether biking is an enjoyable activity for you.
- **Swimming:** Swimming not only provides great health benefits, but is easy on the muscles and joints.

A healthy lunch: Spinach salad with quinoa

Prepare this hearty salad with strawberries for a tasty lunch.

Salad:

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups spinach leaves
- ½ cup strawberries, sliced
- 4 Tbsp. goat cheese
- 1.5 Tbsp. sliced almonds

Dressing:

- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ Tsp. honey
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

1. Cook quinoa according to package directions.
 2. Whisk dressing ingredients together, adding salt and pepper to taste.
 3. In a bowl, combine all the salad ingredients. Add dressing, toss, and serve.
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Tips to stay safe

Outdoors

Regardless of the season, it is important to take certain safety precautions into account when exercising outside. Here are a few safety tips you should keep in mind when planning your workouts.

- **Check the weather and dress accordingly.** Use layers to help regulate your temperature. And if you're biking, remember to wear a helmet.
- **Use sun protection as needed.** Remember that it is possible to get sunburned even when the sky is overcast.
- **Stay on the beaten path.** Stick to terrain and routes that are safe, familiar and comfortable. And—especially important for runners and bikers—follow the rules of the road.
- **Wear proper footwear.** Investing in a new pair of sneakers may help prevent injury and promote comfort.
- **Avoid exercising outdoors after dark.** But if you do choose to work out past sunset, wear reflective clothing or use lights so you are easily seen by motorists.
- **Know your fitness abilities and exercise appropriately.** You can gradually increase the duration and intensity of your exercise over time, but if you overdo it, you may increase your risk of injury or exhaustion.

Get some fresh air

Outdoor activity combats stress

Symptoms of chronic stress include headaches, anxiety, muscle pain, sleep issues, and getting frequent illnesses, like colds. One great way to counteract or even prevent these symptoms is to spend time being active outdoors.

The human body responds positively to natural light, fresh air, and movement. Plus, exercising outdoors can also help you take a break from technology. The act of constantly being “on” and checking your phone for emails and notifications can cause chronic stress. The more often you are able to participate in outdoor activities, the more stress releasing benefits you may receive!

Optimize your Vitamin D levels

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, making it an essential component of bone health. You can get Vitamin D from eating foods like fish, eggs, and fortified milk, and your body also makes Vitamin D when your skin is exposed to the sun. Adults ages 18-70 should get 600 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D a day. Due to the risks associated with too much sun exposure, it is recommended that you maintain your Vitamin D levels through food sources and supplements, as recommended by your physician.

QUIZ

1. **True or false:** Outdoor physical activity may be able to improve your mood.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. **True or false:** Eggs and fish are not good sources of Vitamin D.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. **True or false:** When you begin exercising, take care not to overdo it.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers: 1 a, 2 b, 3 a

