

QuickTakes



Get Active for Summer

People who are physically active live longer and have a lower risk for chronic disease. Going outdoors for exercise is good for your mental and physical well being. Recent studies have found that compared with exercising indoors, exercising in natural environments made people feel revitalized and energetic.

– The CDC advises adults to get at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week.

– The recommendation is more than double for children. The CDC encourages children and adolescents to enjoy at least one hour of active, vigorous play each day.

When the whole family is involved in outdoor activities together, children learn that being active is fun and makes them feel good.

8 Fun (and Inexpensive) Ways to Get Your Family Moving This Summer!

Most of us are naturally more active in the summer. The days are long, the weather is warm and the kids aren't in school. Plus it just feels good to be outside. Even a small increase in your exercise level can do wonders for your health and mood.

So pack plenty of water bottles. Slather on the sunscreen. Then head outside with this list in hand. You'll find that having fun outdoors will help you and your family reach your healthy activity targets:

1. Cycling enhances circulation, which helps keep your heart healthy. And pedaling a bike won't put a lot of strain on your joints. Keep the family bikes tuned up and helmets at hand for rides around your neighborhood. Plan longer rides for the weekend. Talk to the folks at your local bike shop for route suggestions.

Calories burned in 1 hour: 410 (riding at 12 mph)

2. Swimming strengthens nearly every muscle in your body. Swimming puts very little stress on your joints. It also promotes relaxation and concentration. And it's a great way to cool off on a hot summer day. Check schedules at public pools. Or head to a favorite swimming hole.

Calories burned in 1/2 hour: 140 (swimming at 25 yards per minute)

3. Hiking gets you out in nature, whether it's at a nearby park or on a distant mountain trail. Getting away from traffic and noise is a big stress reducer. Regular hikes tone leg, buttock and back muscles. For trail maps and park info, contact your county or state parks department.

Calories burned in 1 hour: 350

4. Playing Frisbee. From playing fetch with the dog to organizing an ultimate Frisbee event, tossing the iconic flying disc builds agility and strength. An intense ultimate Frisbee match will burn oodles of calories.

Calories burned in 1 hour: 170 to 490

5. Dancing. Round up the family, crank up the volume and have a dance party on the patio! Dancing is a great aerobic workout — and it's fun! Quick dances, like salsa or samba, tone your legs, belly and hips.

Calories burned in 1/2 hour: 200

6. Playing tennis builds quickness and agility. During a tennis match, you'll naturally bend, stretch and change direction. This improves coordination. A single tennis stroke requires the smooth movement of countless muscles. An OK racquet and a three-pack of balls will cost less than \$100. It's not hard to find free court time at local parks and schoolyards.

Calories burned in 1/2 hour: 200 (playing singles)

7. Playing tag. Tag! You're it! Enjoy a fast-paced, impromptu game of tag or flag football in the backyard. Kids and grown-up kids love to chase and be chased. It's a great way to get your heart pumping! Flashlight tag is especially fun.

Calories burned in 1/2 hour: 200

8. Paddling. Getting out on the water in a kayak, canoe or standup paddleboard offers a challenging upper-body workout. It builds endurance and strengthens your core. It also helps you teach your children about safety on and around water. Check with your local parks department to find out if they rent equipment (including life vests) at public water access points.

Calories burned in 1 hour: 250–400

Note: "Calories burned" calculations are estimates based on a 150-pound person.

Online Resources for Outdoor Activities



"Practice Tracking Skills," "Explore a Shore," and "Take a Bug Hike" are just three of the dozens of outdoor activity ideas you'll find on the National Wildlife Federation's "Activity Finder" page. The interactive tool lets you search activities by family members' interests and fitness levels and kids' ages.

www.nwf.org/Activity-Finder



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Let's Go Outside!" website is chock-full of fun activities that connect people with nature. Includes links to upcoming events at wildlife refuges across the country.

www.fws.gov/letsgooutside

5 Favorite Thirst-Quenchers

It's summer, it's hot and you don't want to get dehydrated. The key is to drink before you get thirsty. Ice-cold water or unsweetened iced teas are the best place to start. Or try one of these refreshing thirst-quenchers:

Cherry Fizz: In a large pitcher, stir together 2 quarts chilled seltzer with one 12-ounce can frozen cherry juice concentrate. Serve over ice. Garnish with fresh cherries. About 120 calories per 12-ounce glass.

The Arnold Palmer: Mix 2 parts (unsweetened) black tea with 1 part prepared lemonade. (For convenience, use Lipton's Cold Brew Tea bags.) Serve over cracked ice. Garnish with a lemon slice. About 60 calories per 12-ounce glass.

Red Zinger Sangria: Make a large pitcher of Celestial Seasonings Red Zinger tea (or other hibiscus flower tea), add lemon, orange and watermelon slices. Chill to blend flavors. Serve over ice. About 40 calories per 12-ounce glass.

Jamaica Ginger Juice: In a blender, puree one 12-ounce can frozen pineapple juice concentrate and 1/4 cup crystallized ginger pieces. Transfer to a large pitcher and stir in 2 quarts cold water and lots of ice. About 130 calories per 12-ounce glass.

Nojitos: For an alcohol-free version of a mojito cocktail, in the bottom of a pitcher, bruise with a large wooden spoon: 2 big handfuls fresh mint leaves, 3 tablespoons superfine sugar and 1 teaspoon grated lime zest. Add the juice of 6 limes and 1 quart (32 oz) chilled soda or seltzer. Serve over crushed ice. About 100 calories per 12-ounce glass.



Recipe Source: Healthy Living Kitchens