

Is Work Keeping You From Enjoying the Outdoors?

By Jon Spayde



You know that immersing yourself in the natural world can refresh your spirits and lower your stress level. But your demanding job keeps you chained to a computer, and after work there's a houseful of family responsibilities. You rarely seem to take that nature walk, or spend that leisurely "green hour" so widely recommended for kids and adults alike (learn more at www.greenhour.org).

Retired University of Minnesota psychologist Martha Farrell Erickson, PhD, who serves on the board of the Children and Nature Network, is dedicated to overcoming what founder Richard Louv calls our "nature-deficit disorder." Erickson's convinced that even today's screen-bound, overworked adults can find green time if they're willing to try a few simple measures.

Stress Source -

Too little nature time

The feeling that you'd like to get outside more, for pleasure and health, but can't seem to make it happen.

Barriers to Overcome

Worries about time, connectivity and productivity.

Tech-driven anxiety can keep us indoors, says Erickson. "If we don't return an email in a couple of hours, we worry that people will think we're slackers or we've fallen off the edge of the earth."

Cyber-amnesia.

Many of us have no idea how much time we're spending in front of screens, especially in our leisure hours.

We lose track of time, so we lose time we could have spent outdoors.

Outdoor anxiety.

"A lot of people are afraid to let their kids go outside, because of 'stranger danger,'" says Erickson, "but many younger adults who have grown up indoors aren't comfortable outside, either."

Weather worries.

If you wait for a perfect day to go outside, you'll get precious little nature time. "There's no such thing as bad weather, just inadequate clothing," says Erickson.

How to Cope

Make nature time part of the workday. Erickson suggests scheduling time to be in nature as a regular part of your routine, and treating it like any other recurring appointment. "Let your friends and associates know ahead of time that you will be away from your desk at a certain time of the day," she advises. "Set up an auto-reply on your email and a message on your phone answering machine that lets people know when you will be reachable again."

Try "tamed" nature. If you're apprehensive about the outdoors, remember that you don't need to plunge into a trackless forest or buy a lot of fancy protective gear to enjoy nature. "A short walk in a formal park or on a carefully maintained nature trail gives you what you need: access to living, growing things," says Erickson.

Enjoy a nature "snack." An outdoor jaunt doesn't need to be long to be renewing. Even a few moments tending a front-porch container garden can help you feel refreshed and recentered. Erickson keeps a canvas folding chair in her car and settles into it for 15-minute outdoor breaks when she finds herself near parks or other green spaces. >



Recipes

Guacamole

Recipe courtesy Alton Brown

Prep Time: 20 Min

Cook Time: 1hr Serves: 1 batch



3 Haas avocados, halved, seeded and peeled
1 lime, juiced
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced

1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 medium onion, diced
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro

In a large bowl place the scooped avocado pulp and lime juice, toss to coat. Drain, and reserve the lime juice, after all of the avocados have been coated. Using a potato masher add the salt, cumin, and cayenne and mash. Then, fold in the onions, tomatoes, cilantro, and garlic. Add 1 tablespoon of the reserved lime juice. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour and then serve.

Zucchini Bread

Recipe courtesy Paula Deen

Prep Time: 10 min

Cook Time: 1 hr

Serves: 2 loaves



Ingredients

3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup vegetable oil
1/3 cup water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 1/2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons baking soda
3 cups sugar
4 eggs, beaten
2 cups grated zucchini
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, nutmeg, baking soda, cinnamon and sugar. In a separate bowl, combine oil, eggs, water, zucchini and lemon juice. Mix wet ingredients into dry, add nuts and fold in. Bake in 2 standard loaf pans, sprayed with nonstick spray, for 1 hour, or until a tester comes out clean. Alternately, bake in 5 mini loaf pans for about 45 minutes.

Health Tips

6 Great Ways to Get Fit Outdoors

Experts share their favorite ways to shape up and have fun outside.

By Jennifer Nelson

You've been indoors most of the winter, with just a treadmill for company. And then you hear it -- the siren call of warmer weather, calling you outside. You'd be wise to heed that call. Pleasant temperatures and the visual interest of your surroundings can not only motivate you to exercise, but help you enjoy it more, experts say. "And if you love doing an activity, you're more apt to do it regularly. But what should you do once you get out of doors? Fitness experts give us their picks for some of the best (and most enjoyable) fitness activities out there: walking, jogging, biking, swimming, hiking, and kayaking.

Walking

It's easy on the joints, you don't need a lot of fancy equipment, and you can burn calories, even though it's a more modest amount compared to some other activities walking for 30 minutes, 5 days a week, at a brisk pace (about 4 mph) will help ward off chronic disease.

Equipment Needed: Good athletic shoes are all you need.

Pros: Helps build cardiovascular endurance. Almost everyone can do it, regardless of fitness level.

Cons: You may not lose weight as quickly as with some other forms of cardiovascular exercise.

Jogging/Running

Jogging is terrific for your heart and lungs, and it improves your stamina. The key is to start slowly. The general rule is to increase your time or distance by no more than 10% each week.

Equipment: It's important to get a good pair of running shoes, and, for women, a quality sports bra.

Pros: Running is an excellent cardiovascular exercise.

Cons: Running can be hard on muscles and joints and can cause injuries such as shin splints and tendinitis.

Cycling

Not only is bicycling an excellent cardiovascular exercise, but you can really explore your community by cycling to different neighborhoods or in parks, bike paths, or trails.

Equipment: You need a bike, a helmet, and gloves with a little palm padding, which will absorb vibration and cushion your hands in a spill.

Pros: Biking is fun, can be used as transportation, and works different muscles than walking or running.

Cons: Equipment can be expensive. You'll also need to couple it with strength training or another form of weight-bearing activity for optimum fitness.

Swimming

Swimming is a wonderful cardiovascular conditioner that also helps tone arms and legs, and it's very easy on the joints. In fact, it's perfect for people who have muscle or joint problems. The weightlessness of the water helps them exercise pain-free.

Equipment: A swimsuit and maybe goggles.

Pros: Most people already know how to swim; it's fun, refreshing, and forgiving of excess weight or physical disabilities.

Cons: Not everyone has easy access to pools, lakes, or the ocean. Swimming is not weight bearing, so you should pair it with other activities such as walking or lifting weights.

Hiking

Hiking uses a lot of up-and-down movement, so you get a tremendous leg workout along with the cardiovascular benefits. Hiking provides a relaxing atmosphere for a workout that doesn't seem like a workout at all but it does require some preparation.

Equipment: You'll need a good pair of hiking boots, a backpack (to carry water and supplies), and possibly a walking stick.

Pros: Hiking is a great leg, ab, and butt workout, and it helps build cardio endurance.

Cons: This is generally a weekend-only activity.

Kayaking

Kayaking is primarily an upper-body sport, but it also works the muscles of the center of your body, back, and stomach. To prepare your body for kayaking, pay attention to working out your shoulders, abs, and lower back.

Equipment: A kayak, a helmet, a personal flotation device, and safety gear such as throw ropes and wet suit for cooler weather

Pros: If you love the water, kayaking is a fun and scenic way to work out.

Cons: Equipment is expensive, and you need training before you hit the water on your own.

Links & Upcoming Events

Links



Tara Parker-Pope on Health

Wellness Blog New York Times
Blog
www.well.blogs.nytimes.com



Today's Health & Wellness Club
Fitness Products & Resources
www.healthandwellnessclub.com



Vegetarian Times
Online Magazine
www.vegetariantimes.com

Join columnist Tara Parker-Pope as she sifts through medical research and expert opinions for practical advice to help readers take control of their health and live well every day.

Today's Health & Wellness Club is a community of people focused on improving their overall balance in life through healthy eating & activities.

For over 30 years, Vegetarian Times has been at the forefront of the healthy living movement, providing delicious recipes, expert wellness information and environmentally sound lifestyle solutions to a wide variety of individuals.

Upcoming Events

Prediabetes Class

Monday, August 17

1:30-4:00pm

Lakeland Center for Outpatients Services, St. Joseph

This class is designed for anyone who has higher-than normal blood sugar levels and is at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. You will learn important lifestyle changes that can help them avoid or delay the onset of diabetes.

Eating Right for a Healthy Heart

Tuesday, August 25

6pm

Lakeland Regional Medical Center, St. Joseph

Learn how better food habits can help reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Lose Weight ... Gain Health

Wednesday, August 5

Community Room - Lakeland Regional, St. Joseph

Wednesday, August 12

Lakeland Community Hospital, Niles

All seminars begin at 7pm

If your struggling with your weight, you're not alone. Obesity is not a character defect or due to lack of willpower, it is a treatable disease. This class will discuss many options for losing weight.

Women's Health - Bones in Balance

Tuesdays & Thursdays, August 4 to 27

9:30 to 11:30am or 5 to 7:30pm

Lakeland Center of Outpatients Services

& Niles-Buchanan YMCA

(269) 556-7150 St. Joseph or (269) 683-6800 Niles

This four-week class is specially designed to teach those diagnosed with osteoporosis and osteopenia how to successfully live with the disease through self-management tips from a pharmacist, registered dietitian, nurse educator, and counselor.