



May 2018

Outside-the-box ways to spend time outside

Fresh air and sunshine are good for our health, and being active in the outdoors is better yet. Even if you're not an avid runner or cyclist, there are so many other wonderful ways to get the exercise you need while taking in the joys of nature, family, and friends. Here are a few ideas that might inspire you to grab your sneakers and head out the door for an activity that may be new to you.

Go birding. Take a walk, observe and listen. You'll find song and color all around you. Try different habitats for different species. Join an organized birding hike in your community. Use binoculars if you have them.

Try outdoor yoga. If you like yoga, you'll love outdoor yoga. Many communities hold outdoor yoga classes in parks or on beaches. Let the breezes and sounds of nature add to the enjoyment of your practice.

Go canoeing, kayaking, or paddle boarding. Paddling a canoe, kayak or paddle board is a good workout. Many parks and outdoor equipment stores rent the equipment. (Don't forget the flotation devices.)

Work in a community garden. Volunteer to help plant or care for a community garden to get some beneficial time working outdoors while making the world more beautiful.

Bike to the store. Use a backpack or bike basket to carry your purchases home. Get your exercise and run your errands in one fell swoop.

QuickTakes



Get outside for better health

Ever notice how going for a walk on a beautiful sunny spring day helps put a spring in your step? You're not imagining it. There are some very definite benefits to your health and overall well-being that come from being active outdoors. Exercising indoors is definitely good for you, of course—but when you head outside and get moving, the effects are even better.

It's been shown that "green exercise" – or exercising outdoors – improves both mental and physical health. It can boost energy, improve your concentration, sleep, and mood, and help with losing weight. And the more you exercise outside, the more you'll be motivated to keep it up. There's even some evidence that exercise actually seems easier when it's done outdoors. What's more, even just a few minutes a day being active outside is enough to have healthful benefits.

Vitamin D from sunshine helps boost mood. The color green promotes relaxation and can help reduce depression and anger. Organic compounds released by plants, and negative ions in the air, can help with anxiety, sleep problems, and depression, and possibly even help fight tumors. Clearly the feel-good effects of spending time outdoors and being active are very real.

This month's newsletter will open the door to ways of being active outside.

Walk the beach. If you're lucky enough to live on the shores of the ocean or a large body of water, turn your stroll into a treasure hunt. Search for the prettiest and most unusual seashells or colorful rocks. If you start a collection, you'll be more motivated to get out there again and again.

Stroll the farmers market. You'll be outdoors, you'll be walking, you'll carry your purchases (weight training!) and you'll have fresh, seasonal, local foods for healthful eating. Take in the colors and textures, the aromas, and the great people-watching.

Play like a kid. Organize some old-fashioned backyard games like badminton, croquet, or wiffle ball. Invite the neighbors. Have a tournament with fun prizes. Cool off with the hose or run through the sprinkler.

Dance at an outdoor concert. Whether you're enjoying a community band in the local park or a world-class act at a festival, move while you groove. Dance your heart out. Nobody's watching (except maybe your kids).

Source:

Get Out! 5 Benefits of Outdoor Exercise, 3/27/2018

<https://www.acefitness.org/education-and-resources/lifestyle/blog/6360/get-out-5-benefits-of-outdoor-exercise> (Accessed 2/21/2018)

Mango Smoothie Pops Makes 10 pops

Fun and fat-free, these pops take less than 5 minutes to assemble. They're frozen and ready to eat in about 3 hours.

INGREDIENTS

1 envelope unflavored gelatin
 ¾ cup (6 fl oz/180 ml) mango or peach nectar
 2 ½ cups (10 oz/300g) frozen mango pieces
 16 oz (480g) apricot-mango or peach-flavored nonfat yogurt

DIRECTIONS

1. Sprinkle gelatin over mango or peach nectar in a small saucepan. Let stand for 1 minute or until the gelatin softens. Cook over very low heat, stirring, until the gelatin dissolves, about 2 minutes.
2. Combine mangoes, yogurt and the gelatin mixture in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth.
3. Spoon the mixture evenly into 10 3-oz. (90ml) paper cups. Cover tops of the cups with aluminum foil and insert a wooden treat stick through the foil into the center of each cup. Freeze until firm, about 3 hours.
4. To serve, remove the foil and peel cups from smoothie pop.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

55 Calories
 3 g Protein
 0 g Fat
 0 g Saturated fat
 11 g Carbohydrates
 2 g Dietary fiber
 28 mg Sodium