



Outdoor activities that will keep you fit

There's no better time than now to have fun and be fit. Take advantage of the warm weather to get outdoors and work on your fitness goals. Here are five easy ways you can get and stay fit right in your own backyard or neighborhood:

- 1. Play a sport.** You get a great aerobic workout with most any sport you choose. Tennis, softball, football and basketball are all sports that require you to work your large muscle groups. Not only will you have fun enjoying your favorite sport, but you'll be doing your cardiovascular system a world of good.
- 2. Jump rope.** Fun for both children and adults, jumping rope is an inexpensive activity that can be done just about anywhere. It helps you burn calories and build and maintain strong bones. If you have arthritis, osteoporosis, back pain or foot problems, check with your doctor first to see if jumping rope and other high-impact exercises are right for you.
- 3. Get toned in the pool.** Swimming and other water exercises are great low-impact activities, especially for people with arthritis and back problems. The resistance of the water helps build endurance, muscle strength and improves flexibility. The buoyancy of water provides an added benefit because it lessens the stress on joints, muscles and bones. If you're new to water exercise, take it easy at first. Try walking in shallow water. If you can, work up to a jog to strengthen your leg and hip muscles.
- 4. Take the kids to the playground.** It's not only fun for them, but you can also get a good workout. Jungle gyms and monkey bars are great for doing pull-ups and dips. Swinging is a great way to tone your muscles and burn calories. Use the swing to work your abdominal muscles. Sit on the swing but instead of pushing off with your legs to swing, draw your knees up toward your chest. Gradually work up to several repetitions.
- 5. Do yard work.** While you're improving the appearance of your yard, you'll also be getting fit. Pruning bushes, pulling weeds, pushing a lawnmower, and digging in your garden will help tone and strengthen your muscles while improving your endurance, too.

When you're outdoors, don't forget the sunscreen. Choose one that protects from both UVA and UVB rays. Most experts recommend an SPF of 15 or higher. Sunscreens with higher SPF ratings block slightly more UVB rays, but none provide 100 percent protection. Re-apply at least every two hours, and after swimming or sweating. Children's skin is more sensitive; avoid products with chemicals like PABA and oxybenzone. Look for products with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide instead.

Also, make sure you stay well-hydrated. Drink plenty of water before, during and after outdoor activities.