



Do-It-Yourself Health: The Great Outdoors, June 2018



Health & Wellness

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Do you remember fun summer times as a kid chasing lightning bugs, playing capture the flag, swimming or being at camp? Maybe you made s'mores over a fire as a rewarding treat after hours of play. The point is that nature offered many opportunities to get active, explore and enjoy time with family and friends.

That remains true at any age. Outdoor activities are fun, often inexpensive or free, and part of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle. For example, gardening is one excellent outdoor activity that can be done solo or as a family. If your outdoor space is limited, consider options for container, patio, [raised beds or vertical gardens](#); even a modest herb garden can get you a little exercise (*and* provide lots of flavor at meal time). It's also easy to find community groups (including meetup groups via social media) that organize events such as hiking, biking and yoga.

June is National Great Outdoors Month, so there's some extra motivation to get outside and exercise, do volunteer work, or just enjoy nature.

From [national organizations](#) to regional and local groups, there are a variety of events to connect people to healthy active fun outdoors on public lands and waters, so get out and explore nature in your own way! Meanwhile, here are five suggestions to get the month off to a good start.

Geocaching

Geocaching is a fun activity for all ages that combines technology, adventure and nature into the world's largest ongoing treasure hunt. In geocaching, you use a GPS/smart phone to guide you to a location where a hidden container (or "cache") is stored. Once found, you sign an online log book and can trade one of the souvenirs others have left for one of yours. To learn more and get started, go to geocaching.com or download the free app for your smart phone.

Circuit Courses

One way to get adults and kids involved in physical fitness is to make it fun. For example, as an alternate to the usual gym routine, create a circuit course with different activities at a set of stations. From the simplest exercises and games to more strenuous activities, a circuit course can be designed to fit the fitness level (and interests) of the individuals performing the circuit. Jump rope, hop scotch, throwing balls, jumping in the air, relay races, dashes, traditional exercises like push-ups — the possibilities are endless.

Set up the circuit ahead of time, using cones or other ways to define the stations. Indicate what happens at each station and what it will take to complete the circuit. To add a competitive edge, use a stop watch and time how long it takes individuals (or teams if you have enough participants) to complete the course. In [this month's Move for Health handout](#) and the video below, we have five exercises that are good additions to any circuit course!

Video Player

00:00 [Video for Move for Health handout](#)

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Step-ups with Squat

Push-ups/Superman

Theraband Bicep, Tricep and Shoulder

Foot Fire

Paper Plate Roll Out

Backyard Obstacle Course

If a circuit course still feels too much like a regular workout, use your creativity to create a fun, but safe, obstacle course. Hula hoops, pool noodles, string, ladders, buckets, cones, tires, and boards are just a few things you may have around the house that can be used to set up an obstacle course. Make up your own rules about how to get through the course, including activities to be done throughout the course. Time how long it takes to complete the course, crown a winner, then do it all again!

Old-Fashioned Backyard Games

Remember all those fun outdoor games you spent hours outside enjoying when you were a child? Why not try them again (and introduce them to the children in your circle of family and friends)? A few favorites to consider:

- [Scavenger Hunt](#)
- [Freeze Tag](#)
- [Red Light, Green Light](#)
- [Ghost in the Graveyard](#)
- [TV Tag \(or Movie Tag, etc.\)](#)
- [Capture the Flag](#)
- [The list](#) goes on and on!

Fuel Your Fun with Healthy Snacks

When you're enjoying the great outdoors, you're bound to work up an appetite. It's important to pack some snacks that will be healthy as well as satisfy your hunger and thirst. You'll look forward to your rest breaks when you can stop and enjoy your surroundings and nourish your body to keep you going. Aim for high fiber and protein snacks to give you energy — and don't forget to take water along, especially on those hot summer days. Our [Eat for Health handout](#) has all five healthy snack recipes below and a list of the

ingredients you'll need. Give them a try and take them on your next outdoor adventure!

Video Player



Sweet and Salty Trail Mix (adapted from USDA Mixing Bowl)

Peanut Butter Banana Roll-Ups (adapted from USDA Mixing Bowl)

Frozen Fruit Yogurt Bark (adapted from EatingWell.com)

Strawberry Fruit Roll-Up (adapted from FoodNetwork.com)

Stovetop Granola Bars (adapted from AllRecipes.com)

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Get More DIY Health...Anytime

The Do-It-Yourself Health series is now in its third year on the Highmark Health blog. Each month in 2018, our DIY Health experts will be offering five do-it-yourself tips on a relevant health and wellness issue. Although we know it's exciting to get the fresh, new post each month, don't forget that there are more than 25 previous posts available for you to go back to, browse, or share with friends. You can check them out all in one place, anytime that's convenient for you, on [our DIY Health tag page](#).

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