



Health *capsule*



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Join the free outdoor gym



We're lucky in Canada to have so much outdoor space full of natural resources. There are 42 national parks and thousands of lakes and rivers. Why not translate that expanse into a free gym? Local parks, trails, hills, forests and bodies of water are perfect places to get the physical activity that will keep your heart healthy. Here are 4 easy ways to use nature as your own personal gym.

1. Try **Tai Chi or yoga** in a local park. This is a good way to get some activity on very hot days when you might not otherwise want to be doing anything outdoors. The slow, deliberate movements of Tai Chi and yoga are relaxing, but they also build muscle tone and can help you improve your breathing – a great stress buster.
2. **Walk** your local or national park – or around the block or up the local hill in your neighbourhood. You should use a pace that won't make you short of breath, so you could carry on a conversation. It's just a focused and determined pace, not brisk. Use a pedometer and count the number of steps you take. Aim for 5,000 to 10,000 a day. Stop when you need to. Every week, increase the amount of walking by 5 minutes. Go to Parks Canada to find a hiking trail near you.
3. Canada boasts thousands upon thousands of lakes and rivers. Start paddling. Instead of using a motorboat at the cottage, try a **canoe or kayak** for picking up small amounts of supplies or for having some fun on the lake or river. Make sure you wear a lifejacket.

4. Many cities have community gardens. **Planting, weeding and caring** for a garden is a great reason to get outside and do some activity. Plus, you can try planting tasty and healthy herbs or vegetables. Look for a community garden near you. Alternatively, devote part of your balcony or backyard to tomatoes and lettuce.

Stay safe in the heat

It's easy to stay cool in the summer when you've got a lake or pool to jump into. When that's not a possibility, bring along lots of water to drink. You can lose a lot of water through perspiration during physically activity, especially in hot weather. Without sufficient water, your body can't keep you cool and this can cause heat exhaustion. Symptoms include dizziness, headache, increased heart rate and fatigue. Resting in a cool or shady area and drinking water can help get your body cool down.

(Source : www.fmcoeur.qc.ca)

Air quality health index

Air quality is critical to our health. The new **Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)** is a tool to help you plan and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The AQHI is for everyone, including those vulnerable to the effects of air pollution, like seniors, people with chronic illnesses, or parents of young children. It has been designed to help you decide the best time to enjoy your outdoor activities. Please visit the Environment Canada website to check the AQHI in your region : www.ec.gc.ca.

Food safety tips for barbecuing

Many Canadians love to barbecue especially when the weather starts to get warm. As with any type of cooking, it's important to follow safe food handling guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading and causing foodborne illness.

- **Plan ahead.** Thawing of meats should be done in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Sealed packages can be thawed in cold water.
- **Wash your hands** carefully with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat.
- **Bacteria are killed by heat.** Raw meat, poultry, and seafood must be cooked to a safe internal temperature to eliminate harmful bacteria such as E. coli, Salmonella, and Listeria. Use a digital food thermometer to check the temperature (visit www.canadiensante.gc.ca to know the safe internal cooking temperatures).

