

[IMAGE]

Spring Into Action: Take It Outdoors

By Editorial Staff

Daylight savings time is only a few weeks away and spring isn't far behind, bringing (we hope) brighter days, warmer temperatures and the opportunity to take your exercise program outdoors after what has been a bitter winter in many parts of the country. Perfect timing for exercise enthusiasts, both beginner and seasoned, who've been largely confined to the gym for the first few months of 2014.

While inclement weather is still likely to rear its wet, cold head at any time over the next several months, it's important to develop outdoor exercise strategies now so you can take advantage of them when you get the chance. Plus, when you consider that it only takes a few months for the body (not to mention your brain) to get bored with your current workout, it's high time for a change of venues. Here are four outdoor exercise strategies to help you stay focused this spring and continue progressing toward a fitter, healthier you:

1. Park It: Commute to work? Not any more – at least not all the way. Find a location 1/4 to 1/2 mile from work where you can safely park your car. Complete your journey to and from work each day by foot. Not only will you put a big dent in your 10,000-steps-a-day goal, but you'll also likely find that you enjoy it much more than your car ride. By the way, if you've got a park close by work – or home – you can also "park it" by visiting the park a few times a week, either on lunch hour (work) or the weekends (home). Enjoy the scenery, relax with friends / family, and most of all, let your feet walk their way toward a better you.

exercise - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark *2. Pedal It:* Live close enough to work to ride a bike instead? More and more people are saving gas money – and avoiding hectic rush-hour traffic – by cycling to work. Map out the best route to get to and from work, buy yourself a bike bag that can accommodate a change of clothes, and then get a workout ... it's that easy. And of course, if you can't put the bike pedal to the floor for commuting purposes, you can always enjoy the exercise benefits after work or on the weekends.

3. Push It: Going crazy after months of virtual lockdown at your house with rambunctious kids or grandkids? If they're still young enough, now is the time to push them out the door (literally) and give

yourself a great workout at the same time. Strap them in the stroller, lace up your favorite pair of running shoes and hit the road. You'll be surprised at the upper- and lower-body workout you get from a 20-minute stroller jog.

4. Paint It: Been putting off painting the exterior of your home for months because of the weather? With longer, warmer days on the horizon, why not get your home – and yourself – in shape simultaneously by jumping on those outdoor projects on your To-Do List? If your traditional exercise regimen's starting to get you down, this is a great opportunity to mix things up – and get things done at home – by stepping it up around the house. Painting, gardening or even just cleaning up your back yard will all burn plenty of calories while working every muscle in your body. You'll be amazed at how sore you'll be the day after doing something as simple as pulling weeds!

With spring on the way, spring into action and take your exercise program outdoors with these and other great strategies. Talk to your doctor for more ideas to keep you motivated throughout 2014.

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