

Health Insights

June 2023

Outdoor Safety Precautions for the Summer

Stay safe when recreating or working outdoors during the summer months. Taking precautions against exposure to sun, heat and bug bites during this season is essential in supporting health and comfort.

Sun

To protect against the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays:

- **Cover up.** Wear lightweight, tightly woven clothing that you can't see through and will shield your skin from the sun.
- **Use sunscreen.** A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93% of UV rays. Be sure to follow application directions.
- **Wear a hat.** It should protect your neck, ears, forehead, nose, and scalp.
- **Wear UV-absorbent shades.** Sunglasses should block 99 to 100% of UVA and UVB radiation. Before you buy, read the product label.

Heat

The combination of heat and humidity can be a serious health threat during the summer months. To beat the heat:

- Drink plenty of water, even before you get thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as dry-fit material.
- Eat smaller meals before a physical activity.
- Skip the caffeine and soda; drink water instead.
- Be aware that some equipment such as respirators or work suits can increase heat stress.

Ticks

If you're working in or exploring tall grass or wooded areas, take the following precautions to protect yourself from ticks:

- Wear light-colored clothing to see ticks more easily.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants.
- Tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Wear high boots or shoes that cover your feet completely.
- Wear a hat.
- Use tick repellents - but not on your face.
- Wash and dry your outdoor clothes at high temperatures.

Examine your body for ticks after being in an area with possible ticks. Remove any attached ticks promptly. In some regions, ticks may transmit Lyme disease. If you get bit and develop a rash, see your doctor.

Insect Bites & Stings

Bee, wasp, hornet, and yellow jacket stings are typically only dangerous to those who are allergic or have been stung multiple times. Minimize risk of bites and stings from insects by:

- Wear bug repellent and use insect nets when possible.
- Avoid wearing heavy perfumes or scented lotions.
- Check before drinking from cups, bottles, or cans. Many stinging insects are attracted to sweet drinks.
- Shake out boots, shoes, or other clothing that has been left out or unattended before putting it on.



Staying Safe & Healthy in the Outdoors

Spending time in nature is not only enjoyable, but it also has numerous health benefits. It can help lower stress, reduce the risk of heart disease, improve sleep quality, and even lower the risk of cancer. Additionally, being out in nature can improve our mental health by reducing the risk of depression, increasing focus and attention, and helping us form better social connections. It's important to spend time in nature with friends or family, or even by ourselves, to support both our physical and mental well-being.

Urban green spaces, such as parks and gardens, offer a convenient way for individuals living in urban areas to reap the benefits of nature without having to travel far. Whether it is a quick walk through a local park or a leisurely picnic with friends, urban green spaces provide an opportunity to connect with nature and improve overall well-being. Here are some quick tips to keep you safe while spending time outdoors:

- **Dress appropriately for the conditions and season.** Whether you're going on a camping trip or a quick walk in the park, make sure you wear appropriate clothing, like socks, shoes, wicking clothing, or layers.
- **Always carry appropriate safety gear.** You may consider bringing a simple safety bag with you wherever you go. You can find lots of ideas for these online.
- **Learn basic first aid.** In case of an emergency, it is important to know basic first aid to treat things like blisters, cuts, sprains, and dehydration.
- **Share your itinerary.** Drop your location pin to a friend or text someone the name of the trail, route, or park that you'll be in.
- **Be realistic.** Don't push yourself over your limits. Challenging yourself can be fulfilling but remember to stay safe and within your personal limits.

World, T. B. W. (2022, May 7). 20 tips to stay safe in the outdoors. Outdoor Adventure Travel Guides & Tips | This Big Wild World. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/424cx90>

The wellness benefits of the Great Outdoors. US Forest Service. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/412C80P>

Mental Health Moment

Nature & Mental Health

Spending time in green spaces or simply bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. Doing activities like exercising outdoors, camping, growing flowers and other plants, or being around animals can have lots of positive effects for your mental health including:

- Improved mood
- Reducing stress or anger
- Elevated confidence
- Improved self-esteem
- Developing active habits
- Making new social connections
- Providing peer support
- Reducing loneliness

Certain mental health conditions, like anxiety and depression, have been shown to be helped by spending time outdoors. One example of this is ecotherapy, which is a type of formal treatment that involves doing activities in nature, and it has been shown to help with mild to moderate depression.

Natural light can also help if you experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a type of depression that affects people during certain times or seasons of the year. Those who spend more time in natural light during these times report better mental health afterwards.

Here are some ideas of outdoor related activities to try to better your mental health:

- Create a growing space for small plants or herbs. You could do this by yourself or with others.
- Arrange a comfortable space to sit, like a window where you can look at trees or the sky.
- Take a walk in a local park or walking trail.
- Eat meals and socialize outdoors.
- Exercise outdoors. Consider changing your treadmill run for one in a local park.
- Volunteer for a conservation project such as planting trees or building a community garden.

How nature benefits mental health. Mind. (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3VwymvN>

Instant Pot Greek Chicken Bowls



June Quiz

Ingredient List:

- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. Spanish paprika
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 ½ lbs. chicken breasts, boneless, skinless & sliced ½-inch thick
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper, freshly ground
- 1 cup couscous
- 1 cup full-fat Greek yogurt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 English cucumber, chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- ½ cup Kalamata olives, chopped
- ½ cup red onion, chopped
- ½ cup feta, crumbled
- 2 Tbsp. fresh dill, chopped

Instructions:

1. Whisk together the oregano, paprika, red pepper flakes, ¼ cup olive oil, 2 cloves garlic and ½ cup water in the pot of a 6-quart Instant Pot®. Add the chicken, 2 teaspoons salt and a few grinds of pepper and toss until well coated.
2. Follow the manufacturer's guide for locking the lid and preparing to cook. Set the pot to pressure cook on high for 3. After the pressure cook cycle is complete, follow the manufacturer's guide for quick release and wait until the quick release cycle is complete. Be careful of any remaining steam and unlock and remove the lid. Transfer the chicken to a medium bowl and turn the pot off. Add the couscous, ½ teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper to the pot and stir to combine with the hot liquid. Place the glass lid on the top and let the couscous sit until tender and fluffy, 6 to 7 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
3. Meanwhile, mix together the yogurt, lemon juice, remaining clove garlic and 2 tablespoons water in a medium bowl until well combined. Spread ¼ cup of the yogurt sauce on the bottom of a plate. Top with a quarter of the couscous, cucumbers, tomatoes, red onions, Kalamata olives and feta. Repeat with the remaining ingredients 3 more times. Garnish each plate with the dill and a drizzle of the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Total Servings: 4, Calories: 709, Carbohydrates: 48g, Protein: 53g, Fat: 35g, Saturated Fat: 9g, Cholesterol: 150mg, Sodium: 1114mg, Fiber: 5g, Sugar: 6g

Food Network. (2018, October 3). Instant pot greek chicken bowls. Food Network. Retrieved March 28, 2023, from <https://bit.ly/3HBfAh8>

Outdoor Safety Precautions for the Summer

1. What are some tips for protecting against harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays?

2. What are some tips for protecting against ticks?

Staying Safe & Healthy in the Outdoors

3. Which of these is a health benefit of spending time outdoors?
 - a. Improved sleep quality
 - b. Lower risk of heart disease
 - c. Reduced risk of depression
 - d. All of the above
4. When you are planning to spend time outside, you should always do which of the following?
 - a. Share your itinerary with someone else
 - b. Dress appropriately for the activity
 - c. Eat after the activity for more nutrition gain
 - d. Both A & B

Nature & Mental Health

5. _____ is a type of formal treatment that involves doing activities in nature, and has been shown to help with depression.

Healthy Habits Calendar

June 2023 - The Outdoors & Your Health

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Welcome to June: Start the On My Way Challenge.	2	3 Cycling Saturday: Go for a bike ride or other outdoor activity.
4	5 Mental Health Monday: Take 10 minutes to meditate or practice mindfulness.	6	7 Wellness Wednesday: Plan a heart healthy meal via AHA's website *	8	9 Fitness Friday: Spend at least 30 minutes exercising today.	10
11 Self-care Sunday: Replace screen time with reading a book or time outside.	12	13 Tuesday's Tip-off: Have a smoother morning by packing your lunch the night before.	14 Flag Day	15 Challenge Check-In: What hikes have you been on so far this month?	16	17 Social Saturday: Spend quality time with friends or family.
18 Father's Day	19 Juneteenth	20	21 First Day of Summer: Celebrate by spending time outdoors with friends or family!	22	23 Fitness Friday: Play a sport, such as tennis, with a friend group.	24
25 Self-care Sunday: Go to bed in time to ensure a full 8 hours of sleep tonight.	26	27 Tuesday's Tip-off: Stay hydrated - drink plenty of water during the heat.	28 Wellness Wednesday: Natural light helps boost mood, have lunch outside.	29 Challenge Check-In: What has been your favorite hike this month?	30 Friendly Friday: Introduce yourself to someone new.	

* <https://recipes.heart.org>



Challenge: On My Way

With blue skies ahead, new friends to make, and new places to see, being outside has great benefits! Hiking is proven to have other great benefits, such as promoting physical exercise, boosting mental health, and strengthening relationships. There are hundreds of trails, state and national parks, and nature strolls that are available to explore to experience these great health benefits.

For the next month, try to complete 4 hikes. Use the resources below to locate a hike near you. Once you have completed a hike, record the trail name, length, and your completion time below. Remember to bring sunscreen, bug spray, drink plenty of water, and don't forget to have fun!

	Trail Name	Length of Hike	Completion Time
Hike 1			
Hike 2			
Hike 3			
Hike 4			

Hiking Resources



AllTrails is a mobile app and website used for locating outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, climbing, and snow sports. AllTrails provides trail maps for users that include crowd sourced reviews and images.



Find Your Park is a collaboration between the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service, designed to encourage people to find their personal connections to national parks. Users are able to search for activities and national parks near them.

Visit your state's tourism website!

State tourism websites have lists of recommended hikes and other outdoor activities that you can do. Search your state's name followed by tourism (ex. Tennessee tourism) to find the website hosted by the state's tourism department. Then, you can find your next outdoor adventure!

Answers to Quiz:

Q1: Cover up, wear sunscreen, wear a hat, and wear UV-absorbent shades. | Q2: Wear light colors, wear long sleeves and pants, tuck pants into socks or boots, wear high boots or closed shoes that cover feet, wear a hat, use repellent, and wash clothes.

Q3: d. All of the above | Q4: d. Both A & B | Q5: Ecotherapy