



For Release: July–September 2005

Outdoor Fitness Fun

In Michigan, now is perfect time for outdoor fun. Why not try a new activity such as hiking, walking or bike-riding, to get more physical activity into your day?

Regular physical activity helps keep our bodies healthy and strong. It reduces risk of dying from heart disease and of developing colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. Regular physical activity also helps control weight; keeps bones, muscles and joints healthy; reduces falls among older adults; relieves arthritis pain; and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005).

With all of the benefits of physical activity, it may surprise you that over half of all adults are not meeting the recommendations. The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend that to reduce the risk of chronic disease, adults should be active for at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. To prevent weight gain, adults should be active for 60 minutes a day, most days of the week, and to lose weight adults should exercise for 60-90 minutes a day, most days of the week. What you choose to do is up to you but the kinds of physical activity you take part in should be moderate-intensity activities such as brisk walking, gardening, dancing, softball or playing Frisbee; or vigorous-intensity activities which include running, jumping rope, high-

- more -

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Michigan State University • 240 Agriculture Hall • East Lansing, MI • 48824-1039
517.353.9102 • FAX: 517.353.4846 • <http://www.fcs.msue.msu.edu>



Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program staff at MSU Extension can answer questions or help you learn more about money management, parent, food, nutrition and health issues. MSU Extension educators integrate university and community resources to provide tools that help families succeed. For more information on FCS programs in Michigan, call your county MSU Extension office. Check the government pages of your phone book for contact information.

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status. Michigan State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties cooperating. MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity institution.

impact aerobics or sports, such as basketball or soccer (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005).

You don't have to rely on a structured exercise plan to enjoy the benefits of physical activity. Fitting physical activity into your day is easier than you think. Below are a just few suggestions for ways you can add more outdoor fitness fun into your day:

- Walk the dog after dinner. Try to walk at a brisk pace so that you become slightly out of breath. Bring a water bottle with you and drink often, especially when it's very hot outside.
- Visit a local playground with your kids. Swing, slide, or hang from the monkey bars. You'll be surprised at how much fun it is.
- Take a class that meets outdoors such as tennis, sailing, or golf.
- Work in your garden. Rake, weed, water, hoe, and shovel.
- Join a local cycling club. Set a goal to cycle a certain amount of miles over a three month period. Keep track of your progress.
- Volunteer to coach a local youth or adult sports team.
- Find a physical fitness buddy and agree to meet every day. Take turns deciding on the activity of the day.
- Take a walk with co-workers before work, after work, at lunch, or during breaks.

If you would like to begin a physical activity program but have not been active in awhile, start slowly. Begin with short sessions (5-10 minutes) and gradually work up to a comfortable level.

It is important to talk with your physician before beginning a physical activity program. This is especially true if you are pregnant, overweight or have a chronic condition such as diabetes or heart disease. It is also important to consult your doctor if you have been sedentary for a long period of time.

For more information on healthy eating and physical activity, please contact the (INSERT COUNTY NAME) County Extension Office at (INSERT COUNTY PHONE NUMBER OR INTERNET CONTACT ADDRESS). MSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences

Outdoor Fitness Fun, pg. 3

educators are located in all 83 Michigan counties to integrate university and community resources to help families succeed.

###

For more information about physical activity, please visit:

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

www.fitness.gov

American Heart Association

www.americanheartassociation.org

www.justmove.org

United States Department of Agriculture (Inside the Pyramid)

www.mypyramid.gov

Michigan Steps Up (Michigan Department of Community Health)

www.michiganstepsup.org

Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports

www.michiganfitness.org

Prepared by Amy Saxe, M.P.H, R.D., program leader and Chris Flood, program leader, Family and Consumer Sciences, Michigan State University Extension

For disclaimer regarding Web sites please visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msue/cyf/disclaim.html>.