

QuadMed Wellness News



Improve your quality of life

Many adults enjoy the serenity of spending time in nature as a way to escape the stress and craziness of everyday life. Not only can fresh air and natural scenery have a positive impact on adults, outdoor activities for children can also improve the overall quality of kids' lives. Research has shown that spending time in nature has been associated with decreased levels of mental illness, with the strongest links to reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, in addition to increased self esteem.

A few safety tips

- Avoid outdoor activities in extreme temperatures
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay well hydrated
- Listen to your body when determining an appropriate exercise intensity
- Be aware of danger signs and stop activity if you experience any of the following: pain or pressure in your chest, arms, neck or jaw; feeling lightheaded, nauseated or weak; becoming short of breath; developing pain in your legs, calves or back; or feeling like your heart is beating too fast or skipping beats.

Active ways to be social at work

- Invite a co-worker to join you for a quick walk instead of a coffee or smoke break
- If you have a standing 1:1 meeting, suggest making it a walking meeting
- Take the stairs whenever possible
- Bring lunches to a nearby park or outdoor area
- Organize a potluck, but bring a healthy dish
- Organize a weekend company day hike or volunteer to help organize active games at the employee picnic
- Start an employee bowling league
- Join a company sponsored or community sports league
- Find a local fitness event and invite your colleagues to train with you



Get the same pick-me-up as a cup of coffee

Exercise itself is sure to reinvigorate you when you're feeling sluggish, but fresh air can have the same effect. Just 20 minutes outdoors can have the same pick-me-up effect as a cup of coffee because of the instantly energising powers of nature. Often when we feel depleted we reach for a cup of coffee, but this suggests a better way to get energized is to connect with nature.

Reasons to take your workouts outside

- **No membership fees.** The outdoors belong to all of us. You don't need any special equipment – the outdoors is available wherever you are, just outside your door.
- **The air is cleaner.** The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that indoor air is more than twice as polluted as outdoor air.
- **A free daily dose of vitamin D.** Scientists recommend outdoor exercise as a way to get your vitamin D through sunlight. A recent study found that people who are overweight are almost twice as likely to be deficient in vitamin D.
- **Exercise for your mind.** When you exercise outdoors, your mind becomes aware of the changing terrain. Whether you use the hills, the sand on a beach, or a winding path, your mind has to focus differently than it would on a flat gym floor.

Getting started outside

Exercise early: in the morning, your energy is higher, the air is generally cleaner and the temperature is lower.

Avoid temperature extremes: although your body can adapt, you should avoid exercising outside in extreme heat or cold.

Don't get burned: protect yourself with a good sunscreen, and wear sunglasses and a hat with a brim.

Drink enough water: drink about 8 to 10 ounces of water 30 minutes before doing outdoor exercises.

Get some good gear: Take advantage of new technology like waterproof, breathable clothing.

Make outdoors part of your lifestyle: walk instead of driving, or plan outdoor activities with your family.

