

Complete your summer bucket list

Summer often seems to go by more quickly than the other three seasons. Now that we're already into the month of August, you may be wondering to yourself where the time has gone.

Many of us have spent the past couple months filling our days with family outings, outdoor activities and some well-deserved rest and relaxation. However, you still have plenty of time to check a few things off that summer bucket list without adding too much stress and anxiety to your life. Here's what to do:

- 1. Create a "To-Do" list.** Identify things that are important to you and start planning. Is there a summer destination you still want to travel to? Book those reservations now. Or maybe you haven't had time yet to start your new fitness program? Give yourself some extra motivation by putting your sneakers by the front door.
- 2. Don't break the bank!** Summer outings can often be expensive, which can lead to financial stress. Plan a trip to a local farmer's market to fill your picnic basket with fresh and affordable produce. Save some money on gas by riding a bike instead. Or take part in free outdoor fitness classes instead of paying for a gym membership (learn more at [independenthealth.com/fitpark](https://www.independenthealth.com/fitpark)).
- 3. Stay in shape around the house.** For easy exercise, look no further than your own backyard. Mowing your lawn is a high-intensity, low-impact way to burn calories. If you want to strengthen your leg muscles, try squatting instead of kneeling or sitting when gardening and weeding. Plus, being outdoors is a great way to boost your mental health, too!
- 4. Make time for growth and learning.** Consider reading a personal development book to help you in an area where you feel stuck. Learn a new skill like cooking, painting, photography, speaking another language, or even fixing a flat tire. Taking the time to invest in yourself can increase your self-confidence and overall well-being.
- 5. Carve out a little "me time"** to simply relax and enjoy a little peace. Even 10 minutes a day of meditation, mindfulness or journaling can help calm your mind and body. Focus on letting go of negative thoughts and start concentrating on things you are grateful for. Self-care also means staying on top of any preventive screenings that you may need to schedule before the end of the year. Check in with your primary care physician to ensure you stay on track of your annual health and wellness visits.

It's important to not let these final days of summer pass you by or stress you out. Look ahead, make a plan and enjoy every moment!