

Getting OUT is IN!

With summer and the arrival of nicer weather, it's the perfect time to discover the benefits of outdoor play and adventure. Outdoor activities are a vital part of our mental well-being, physical health and social interactions. We encourage everyone to venture out on a local hiking trail, enroll kids in summer camp or join an outdoor fitness class.

Benefits of taking your activity outdoors

- Social engagement is important for all ages. It can lift your mood and keep you motivated. So, grab a friend or the whole family and pick an outdoor activity to do together.
- A little sunshine goes a long way. Just 10 minutes of sunshine can produce enough Vitamin D for an entire day! Sun exposure also stimulates the production of white blood cells, which helps protect against infection.
- You're more likely to stay active longer outdoors than indoors. Treadmill walking can feel monotonous, while outdoor movement feels more engaging, helping you reach your target mileage faster by focusing on the experience instead of a screen.
- Spending time in nature has been linked to improved attention spans (short and long term), boosts in serotonin (the "feel good" neurotransmitter) and shows increased activity in the parts of the brain responsible for empathy, emotional stability and love.

Other great ways to enjoy the outdoors

- **Fitness in the Parks** – FREE outdoor fitness classes running now through August 31 presented by Independent Health and the YMCA. With 22 locations across WNY, there are classes perfect for all ages and abilities. No registration is required. For a list of sites and a full schedule, visit independenthealth.com/fitpark
- **Explore a trail!** WNY has some of the finest parks and trails in New York State. Bring your bike, your sneakers or hiking boots and see where the path takes you! Try the 3-mile Independent Health Wellness Trail along the scenic Buffalo Waterfront at Outer Harbor.
- **A nature walk** can be a great way to relax and unplug. Try a park, your neighborhood or one of our free guided Wellness Walks sponsored by Independent Health every Thursday morning at Tifft Nature Preserve.
- **Get out & give back!** WNY has many volunteer opportunities across the region. From planting trees and gardens to cleaning up along shorelines, giving back to your community is a great way to get active and keep your community looking its best.

Find more great ways to stay healthy all summer long at independenthealth.com/events.