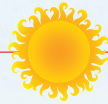


2020 SUMMER THRIVE GUIDE



NEW WAYS TO EAT, PLAY AND
LOVE WELL ALL SUMMER LONG

We're going to be hard-pressed to forget the summer of 2020.

While memories of concerts, festivals and travel won't flood our social media feeds this year, a great Canadian summer is still possible — and you sure deserve one.

We've put together suggestions from some of our experts for squeezing the most out of this make-lemonade-from-lemons season. Keep reading for new ways to EAT, PLAY and LOVE well all summer long.

We've also included our summer safety checklist.

Happy summer!

EAT

- 3 no-fridge-required summer lunches (ideal for picnics + taking to work)
- Tips for healthier grilling
- Delicious DIY popsicles - not just for kids!

PLAY

- 4 creative ways to mix up your outdoor workout
- 5 travel-free adventures to plan
- Why you should take your vacation days this summer

LOVE

- 5 summer self-love strategies
- How to care for your skin
- Safe summer dating 101



EAT



3 no-fridge-required summer lunches

By Andrea Stokes, Registered Dietitian, Medisys Health Group

If you're back at the office, you may be avoiding high-touch areas like the staff kitchen, especially as many workplaces are closing them altogether. Packing a lunch that requires neither heat nor refrigeration can be a challenge, but we're here to help. In addition to stocking your own mini-pantry at your work space, try out one or all of these nutritionally-dense lunches that will be safe out of the fridge all morning.

The best part? These three quick and easy dishes are ideal for taking on summer picnics, too.



Self-chilling yogurt parfaits

Frozen fruit acts as this yogurt parfait's own mini ice pack, keeping it cool for a few hours outside of the fridge. Using plain Greek yogurt provides lots of protein without a lot of added sugar, but if plain yogurt just isn't your thing, try mixing about half and half plain yogurt with flavoured (like vanilla or coconut). You'll still get great taste, but only half the added sugar.

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 cup plain Greek yogurt (or a half-and-half mix of plain and flavoured yogurt)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen mixed berries (or any fruit you like)
- Optional toppings: hemp hearts, slivered almonds, pumpkin seeds, bran buds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Spoon yogurt into a small storage container, then top with frozen fruit.
2. Keep all of your other toppings separate until serving so they don't become soggy.

PRO TIP

Most washed whole fruit and pre-chopped veggies will hold up just fine out of the fridge for a few hours, so they can (and should!) always be a part of a meal.

A close-up photograph of several nut butter and banana roll-ups. The roll-ups are made from whole grain wrap, spread with nut butter, and filled with banana slices. They are rolled up and sliced into bite-sized pieces, showing the layers of wrap, nut butter, and banana. The background is a wooden surface.

Nut butter and banana roll-ups

An old-school lunch favourite gets a creative upgrade that holds up better through your commute, thanks to keeping the banana whole until lunch time. It can be kept at room temperature for a few hours.

INGREDIENTS

- Whole grain wrap
- 2 tablespoons of natural unsweetened nut or seed butter with honey if desired
- Ripe but firm banana
- Drizzle of honey (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Spread the nut or seed butter on the whole grain wrap and drizzle with honey if desired
2. Peel the banana and roll the wrap around it
3. Transport the wrap whole, and slice into bite-sized pieces just before eating to prevent the banana from becoming mushy

A close-up photograph of a bowl of marinated white beans. The beans are light-colored and are mixed with finely chopped green herbs, pinkish-red onions, and small pieces of yellow and green vegetables. The bowl is white and sits on a pink surface.

Marinated white beans

Beans are the perfect protein option when there is no fridge available, since meat, fish and eggs are really off the table. This marinated white bean mix is delicious, satisfying and versatile — enjoy it as a salad on its own, on pre-toasted bread or whole grain crackers, or alongside olives, pita chips and raw veggies.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- Finely-grated zest of 1 medium lemon
- Juice of 1 medium lemon
- 1 medium shallot, diced (about 1/4 cup)
- 1 clove garlic, grated or minced
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ¼ cup chopped fresh oregano leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, shallot, garlic, salt and few generous grinds of black pepper in a large bowl and whisk to combine.
2. Add the white beans, parsley, and oregano and toss to combine. Taste and season with more salt and pepper as needed.
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes before serving, or overnight, to marry flavours. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.thekitchn.com/marinated-white-beans-259044>





Tips for healthier grilling

It's the season to fire up the barbecue! But depending on what you throw on the grill – and how often you enjoy BBQ foods – you may be jeopardizing your health. Some research suggests that when cooked at high temperatures or over open flames, compounds in red and processed meats undergo biochemical reactions that produce carcinogenic compounds. Although the research has not yet been conducted in humans, emerging evidence is starting to connect the dots of these compounds to human risks of cancer.

What's wrong with cooking meat at high temperatures?

Cooking meat at high temperatures when grilling, broiling or frying creates chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which scientists speculate increase cancer risk. PAHs are created when fat and juices from meat drip onto hot coals or stones, causing flames, and are then deposited back onto meat by smoke and flare-ups. The higher the heat and the longer the cooking time, the more PAHs are generated.

Another potentially dangerous class of chemical that forms during direct, high-heat cooking is heterocyclic amines (HCAs).

The amounts of PAHs and HCAs that end up in the meats we eat depends on how we prepare and cook them, as well as the grill temperature, so when you use direct-heat or high-heat methods like grilling, consider applying these safety tips:

1. Marinate your meat (but not with sugar). Certain ingredients in a marinade – wine, beer, tea, vinegar, citrus juice, vegetable oil and fresh herbs – can help prevent carcinogen formation. A marinade also acts as a barrier, keeping flames from touching meat and poultry. Marinating meat in beer, for instance, has been shown to cut PAH formation by as much as half. Its beneficial effect is attributed to a particular flavonoid (phytochemical) in hops, called xanthohumol.

Ale beers have a higher antioxidant capacity than lager beers, so better choices for marinating your steak include stouts, porters, dark ales, cream ales, IPAs (India Pale Ale) and pale ales.

2. Keep portions small. To reduce grilling time, use smaller cuts of meat. Instead of a whole steak, grill kebabs since they cook more quickly. For meats that require longer cooking times, partially cook them in the oven or microwave, drain away the juices, and then finish cooking on the barbecue.

3. Lower the temperature. Turn the gas down or wait for the charcoal to create low-burning embers before grilling meat. Oven roasting and baking are done at lower temperatures, so fewer chemicals are likely to form.

4. Flip often. Continuously turning meat over can substantially reduce HCA formation. To minimize juice drippings, use tongs or a spatula to turn foods every minute rather than piercing meat with a fork and flipping less frequently.

5. Grill fish and shellfish instead. Most types of seafood contain less fat than meat and take less time to cook. Seafood also naturally produces fewer HCAs when cooked.

6. Eat vegetables and whole fruit as sides. Eating plenty of flavonoid-rich foods – like berries, cherries, red grapes, apples, citrus fruit, broccoli, kale and onions – may help offset the harmful effect of PAHs and HCAs. Research has also shown that adding one cup of mashed whole cherries to a pound of ground meat suppresses carcinogen formation in burgers by nearly 80 percent.

Delicious DIY popsicles – not just for kids!



There are few things more nostalgic than a sticky, drippy, brightly-coloured popsicle on a hot summer day. Whether they came from the box or the corner store, the icy childhood treats most of us grew up with were loaded with sugar and artificial colours.

This summer, let's bring back popsicles made from simple, nutritious ingredients you may already have at home!

We've got three recipes below that are sure to wow kids and grownups alike. Before you get started, here are our tips for making great DIY popsicles:

- 1) You will need popsicle sticks, sturdy straws or kebab skewers.
- 2) A popsicle mould (any variety will do!) makes the process easier, but it's not essential. An ice cube tray, clean recycled yogurt containers or even a muffin tin will work. If you have trouble getting your sticks to stand up straight, secure a piece of foil over the top of your mould before poking them through.
- 3) The mixture will expand as it freezes, so always leave a little space at the top when filling your moulds.
- 4) For best results, crank up your freezer and let your popsicles freeze for at least four hours.
- 5) Run your popsicle mould under warm water for 10 seconds to help your treats slide out easily before eating.



A top-down photograph of several chocolate fudgesicles on wooden sticks, resting on a dark surface with ice cubes and fresh mint leaves. The fudgesicles are rectangular with a ribbed texture.

Vegan chocolate fudgesicles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of full fat coconut milk
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth, or mix well in a bowl.
2. Pour into moulds, freeze and enjoy!

Adapted from sweetpeachef.com

A top-down photograph of several bright green popsicles on wooden sticks, arranged on a grey plate. The background is a textured, light-colored surface.

Sneaky green popsicles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup fresh spinach
- 1 1/2 cups orange juice
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 very ripe bananas, fresh or frozen

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into moulds, freeze and enjoy!

Adapted from liveeatlearn.com





Fancy peaches & cream popsicles

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ripe peaches, peeled and sliced into wedges
- 6 tablespoons honey or maple syrup, divided
- Pinch of sea salt
- 2 cups plain yogurt (Greek or regular, ideally not fat-free)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toss peaches with 2 tablespoons of honey and pinch of salt, then roast on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 - 30 minutes, until soft and juicy.
2. While peaches are roasting, blend yogurt, the rest of the honey, lemon juice and vanilla extract in a blender or mix well in a bowl.
3. Let the peaches cool, then fold them and all of their juices into the yogurt mixture.
4. Spoon into moulds, freeze and enjoy!

Adapted from CookieandKate.com

PRO TIP

Most smoothie recipes also make delicious popsicles! If you're already a smoothie drinker, try pouring any leftovers at the bottom of the blender into a popsicle mould.

PLAY



4 creative ways to mix up your outdoor workout



By Jenna Carducci, Kinesiologist, Copeman Healthcare Centre

With beautiful weather upon us and indoor gyms still closed or operating with capacity restrictions, getting active outdoors is a win-win.

Walking, running or biking usually come to mind when we think about outdoor exercise, but it's easy to get creative with an outdoor workout that involves cardio and strength training. Whether you're working out in your backyard or at a local park, here are four ways to mix up your outdoor workout this summer:

1. Park bench or picnic table workout

A park bench or picnic table can be a great tool for bodyweight exercises, especially for those of us missing the equipment available at our indoor gyms. You can use benches and picnic tables for all sorts of exercises including tricep dips, pushups, step-ups and more. If you don't live close to a park with a bench or picnic table, try using a sturdy chair that you have at home in your backyard. Remember to sanitize your hands before or after touching any public surfaces.

2. Four corner circuit

If you have access to a soccer field or open-spaced park, try a four-corner circuit workout. Assign each corner of the field a different exercise and then walk or run laps around the field, completing each exercise throughout the lap. For example,

corner one could be squat jumps, corner two could be pushups, corner three could be sit-ups and corner four could be jumping jacks.

3. I spy workout

Go for a walk or run (or stay in your front yard) and assign different objects to exercises. For example, if you see a dog, complete 5 squats; if you see someone on rollerblades, complete 10 walking lunges; if you see someone else running, walk or run as fast as you can for 45 seconds.

4. Deck of cards workout

Make a list that assigns each card in a deck to a specific exercise. Shuffle the deck and pull cards randomly from the deck to complete your workout. For example, aces are pushups, 2's are burpees, 3's are 30-second planks, 4's are 30-second bird dogs, etc. You can assign a time for each card or complete a certain number of reps for each card. Keep going until you've finished the deck!

Watch this Copeman TV video as an example.


Remember, no matter what outdoor exercise you plan to try, consult your healthcare professional first to make sure it's safe and appropriate for your health and fitness level.





5

travel-free adventures to plan



From jobs to routines, we have all experienced losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. But there's one thing every one of us is grieving together: the feeling of freedom.

For many Canadians, summer is synonymous with travel — a great expression of freedom — and, while we likely won't be crossing any borders this season, we can (and should!) safely embrace our sense of adventure in the coming weeks and months. Here are five ideas to consider:

1. Hit the road

If you have a vehicle, there's a good chance you've only used it to drive to and from the grocery store or pharmacy in recent months. And for good reason! But while travel restrictions are in place and gas is still inexpensive, a local road trip complete with snacks, a good playlist and no deadline may provide the change of scenery you've been craving. Choose a destination with treelined roads, a quaint town you haven't seen in a while or some beautiful lookout points — or set out without any destination at all. Just remember to continue practicing physical distancing at all times. That means refraining from getting out of the car if others are present at designated roadside stops, avoiding public restrooms and staying at least two metres away from people if you need to stop for gas.

From heat stroke to insect bites, summertime is full of health care questions. Keep medical advice at your fingertips with on-demand access to a trusted virtual care provider. [Request more information about our virtual care services.](#)

2. Play tourist in your own town

If you've taken the same walk around your block what feels like a thousand times since #StayHome orders were put in place, consider choosing a different starting point. It might take a little experimenting with times and locations to find a place in your town or neighbourhood that is empty enough to facilitate proper physical distancing, but discovering or re-discovering a local landmark, green space, ravine, trail or residential community can provide a sense of wonder and excitement that many of us are lacking these days. Pack a blanket, a picnic, an outdoor speaker and some good reading material for a more special experience.

3. Camp out

A guaranteed home run for children: dust off any old camping gear you have and set it up in the backyard for an afternoon, or better yet for an overnight adventure. Remember that kids

don't care if they're at a highly-rated campsite; the outdoors and the change in surroundings is enough to ignite their curiosity. Look for bugs in the grass, sing campfire songs, listen to the birds and eat oven-toasted s'mores for dessert. Note: this is equally fun for grownups.

4. Take a spin

Take an outdoor bike ride for a literal change of pace and practice mindfulness as you feel the wind on your face. Particularly if cycling isn't a regular activity for you, take this opportunity to revel in the childlike joy it can evoke. Remember to wear a homemade mask while cycling to protect others from your droplets, and keep a distance greater than two metres from people biking in the same path (some studies show that droplets can linger further than two meters when people are active in the same pathway).

5. Plan an epic post-pandemic trip

Previous generations often perused travel books and destination brochures for months before calling a travel agent to book a trip. Today it's become commonplace (pre-pandemic, at least) to book a last-minute flight or vacation with little planning or thought. If you're longing to cross an ocean or board a plane (and who isn't?), try using this mandated travel hiatus to dust off a world map and start dreaming about a future adventure. Wanderlust can be an art form! There are endless online resources available to learn about the world and the various experiences that we will be able to enjoy in the future. So regardless of when that epic trip will become reality, there's no time like the present to start planning for it. In fact, studies show that looking forward to travel is actually one of the most gratifying aspects of it.





Why you should take your vacation days this summer

When the eight-hour workday was established in the late 1800s, it was designed to organize workers' days into three periods: eight hours of work, eight hours of rest, eight hours of "what we will" (in other words, things you like to do). This ideal schedule has slowly morphed into much more work, much less rest, and — for most Canadians — very few hours spent doing what we love.

Taking a vacation — which doesn't necessarily have to be a trip — is an ideal antidote to the realities of modern life. Carving out time to rest, connect with loved ones and do things for pleasure can cultivate creativity, spark joy and generally allow us to disconnect from the stressors of daily life. And yet many of us aren't doing it.

In fact, 31 million vacation days are left unused by Canadians each year, according to Expedia's Vacation Deprivation Study. We are also only mandated to take just 10 vacation days annually, compared to many Europeans who are required to take 25 to 30!

As North Americans, we tend to live to work, rather than work to live, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when those of us who are fortunate to still have jobs may feel guilty or undeserving of taking a vacation right now — or just feel like there's no time. And since there's nowhere to go, we would be wise to save our vacation days for when we can travel again, right?

Wrong. We encourage you to take some time off from work this summer if you have the option. Here's why:

You need a break. No matter how you have been personally affected by the coronavirus pandemic, you are most likely tired, stressed and emotionally burnt out. The last couple of months have also been busy for most Canadians, between

juggling work or searching for work, childcare and household tasks, as well as the burden of staying up to date with the changing state of the world.

But while we often confuse stress with accomplishment, please repeat this to yourself: stress is not a badge of honour. Your health — both mental and physical — need attention, namely rest. If you feel guilty about this reality, try replacing the word "rest" with the more active synonym "recovery," as licensed social worker Melody Wilding recently told the Huffington Post.

It's linked to a number of health benefits. Numerous studies have linked taking time off to a range of health benefits including reduced stress levels, stronger immune responses, better sleep and even a reduced risk of heart disease. Can you think of a downside to taking vacation when it comes to your health and well-being? Probably not!

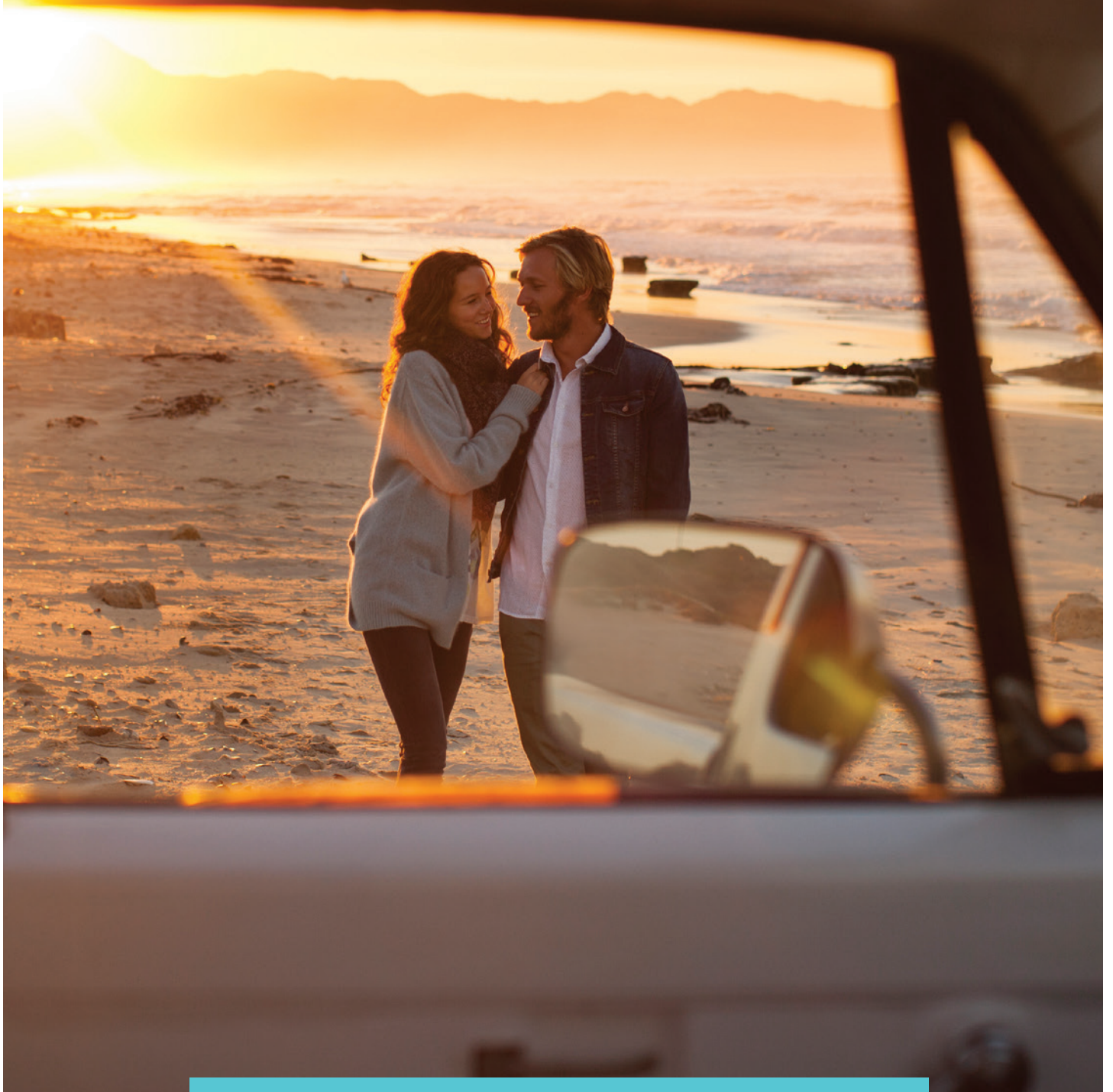
You'll do better work when you return. Those who take vacations are more creative, more emotionally stable, more productive at work — and they actually take fewer sick days than their workaholic counterparts.

Your family and friends will benefit. This may seem obvious, but taking time off from work restores our sense of wellbeing, which makes us better parents, roommates, family members and friends. In fact, a study by the Arizona Department of Health and Human Services revealed that women who take vacations are more satisfied with their marriages.

You'll reap benefits right away. Studies show that the happiness surge we feel when booking time off can last for up to eight weeks leading up to the vacation. So do your future self a favour and book that summer vacation now.



LOVE



5

summer self-love strategies

Every Canadian can benefit from more self-love right now. Here are five realistic strategies to consider trying this summer:

1. Go off the grid.

As a society, we have never been more connected to technology than we are today. While video conferencing, social media and digital news platforms have been vital tools during the global COVID-19 pandemic, stepping away for a period of time is equally important. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but try turning off your devices for one or two waking hours every day, and spending that time outside in the vast real world, with loved ones (safely), or doing something you love like reading or cooking for pleasure instead.

2. Address the voice in your head.

Most of us have a running commentary in our heads for a good part of the day, and stressful situations can increase our negative thoughts. Spend some time each day trying to notice the feeling of just being — noticing the space in between your thoughts — even if just for a moment. This present moment exercise is a powerful tool that can ultimately remind us that thoughts are just thoughts.

3. Make your bed.

This simple act may feel like a drag at first, but you will smile every time you walk by your made bed for the rest of the day. A morning habit like this one can also help set the tone for a positive, peaceful day.

4. Splurge on yourself.

This doesn't mean blowing your grocery budget on gadgets or clothes, but allow yourself to indulge in something that 1) you can afford, 2) you don't necessarily need and 3) brings you joy. That might be the beautiful-looking summer cherries that aren't on sale, renting a movie on demand, or ordering a specialty coffee from your local coffee shop.

5. Read something that has nothing to do with work or coronavirus.

When was the last time you read something solely for pleasure? Many libraries have reopened with curbside pickup, so there is no excuse not to get lost in a good book this summer (bonus points for doing so outdoors!)





How to care for your skin

EAT • PLAY • LOVE



Perhaps this year more than ever, we are all looking forward to the warm summer sun and the outdoor sports and activities that it allows. But while the UV radiation from the sun provides us with many benefits, overexposure presents many risks. UV radiation reaches the earth from the sun in the form of UVB and UVA rays; UVB radiation plays a key role in skin cancer while UVA rays, which penetrate the skin more deeply, are associated with skin wrinkling, leathery and sagging.

Did you know that you are at risk of UV damage even if you are sitting inside and enjoying the rays through a window? If daily sun protection has fallen off your enormous to-do list in recent months, it is time to re-prioritize it. Here's how to care for your skin this summer:

1) **Clothing** is our first line of defence against the sun's harmful UV rays and protects us by absorbing or blocking much of this radiation. The more skin you cover, the better.

2) Don't forget a wide-brimmed (3-inch or greater) **hat** and a pair of **UV blocking sunglasses**.

3) Your next line of defence is **sunscreen**. Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to prevent UVB from damaging the skin.

Here's how it works: it takes 20 minutes for your unprotected skin to start turning red. Using an SPF 15 sunscreen theoretically prevents reddening 15 times longer – usually for about five hours. Another way to look at it is in terms of percentages: SPF 15 filters out approximately 93 per cent of all incoming UVB rays, SPF 30 keeps out 97 per cent and SPF 50 keeps out 98 per cent. The difference may seem negligible, but for light-sensitive individuals, or those with a history of skin cancer, those extra percentages make an important difference. Furthermore, higher SPF values offer some safety margin, since most people generally do not apply enough sunscreen.

Sunscreen Do's & Don'ts

1. Do choose an SPF of no lower than 30 and no higher than 50, with at least three of the following active ingredients: salicylates, and/or cinnamates for UVB absorption; benzophenones (such as oxybenzone) for shorter-wavelength UVA protection; and avoben - zone, ecamsule (Mexoryl), titanium dioxide, or zinc oxide for the remaining UVA spectrum.

2. Do choose a water-resistant sunscreen that will stay put on hot days, while playing sports, or if you spend a lot of time outdoors. These sunscreens are also less likely to drip into your eyes when you sweat.

3. Do use enough. To get the full SPF of a sunscreen, you need to apply one ounce – about a shot glass full. Most people apply only one-half to one-quarter of that amount, which means the actual SPF they have on their body is lower than advertised. To allow ingredients to fully bind to the skin, apply 30 minutes before sun exposure.

4. Don't forget to reapply. No sunscreen, regardless of strength, should be expected to stay effective longer than two hours without reapplication. It should also be reapplied immediately after swimming, toweling off, or sweating during sports.

5. Don't rely solely on a high SPF. Products with very high SPFs can create a false sense of security, prompting individuals to stay out in the sun longer and neglect other sun-protective behaviors, like seeking the shade and wearing sun-protective clothing. However, sun damage (for example, UVA damage, which not only accelerates skin aging, but also contributes to skin cancers) can take place without skin-reddening doses of UV radiation.

6. Do look for the new seal of recognition for proper UVA & UVB protection. Only a sunscreen with a UVA protection factor that is one third of the UVB protection factor can possess the new seal of recognition issued by Health Canada.

7. Do wear sunscreen daily, including cold or cloudy days: up to 40 per cent of the sun's UV radiation reaches the earth on a completely cloudy day.

8. Don't expose children under the age of six months to either the sun or to sunscreen. Shade and protective clothing are the best ways to protect infants from the sun.



A young man and woman are sitting on a wooden park bench outdoors. The man, on the right, is smiling broadly and looking at a smartphone held in his hands. The woman, on the left, is also smiling and looking towards the phone. They are both dressed in casual summer clothing. The background is a soft-focus view of a park with green trees and a path. A bright pink rectangular box is overlaid in the top right corner, containing the title text.

Safe summer dating 101

By Dr. Jaleh Shahin, Registered Psychologist, Medisys Health Group

With the emphasis still on physical distancing this summer, we are continuing to adapt to new ways of socializing and connecting. In the recent weeks, I have received many questions about intimacy, dating and sex. Whether you're in a relationship or longing to go on a date, here are some tips for navigating intimacy during the summer of 2020:

1. First, consider these new realities

We are all responding differently to the stress and uncertainty we are still faced with. While some may use sex and intimacy as a way to connect and relieve stress, others may notice a reduction in their libido and find that intimacy is the last thing on their minds. Both of these responses are completely normal. It is critical that you have an open and honest discussion with your partner about their interest and comfort level before engaging in any intimate activity.

It's also important to remember that COVID-19 can be transmitted via respiratory droplets from close contact with an infected person, as well as by touching a surface that has the virus on it and subsequently touching your face. Currently, we do not have evidence to suggest that the virus can be found in semen or vaginal fluids. There is evidence, however, that the virus can be found in saliva or feces.

The following suggestions for single and partnered individuals are based on our current knowledge, which may change over time.

2. If you're single and looking to explore romantic opportunities

For many Canadians, bars, indoor restaurants, theatres and fitness facilities remain closed, and for all of us, physical distancing guidelines are still in effect. So, unless you have managed to master the art of dating in the grocery store line, six or seven feet apart, while wearing your homemade mask, in-person dating presents a unique challenge these days.

If you are single and would like to pursue dating, consider going online. If you have found someone you are interested in and would like to go on a date with, consider going on a virtual one. Have a coffee via video chat, try cooking "together" while in your separate kitchens, share a virtual meal or play an online game. Engage in phone conversations like we used to do before texting became our dominant method of communication, and use this opportunity to get to know each other better.

Following physical distancing guidelines means that you are keeping at least two meters apart from those who you do not

live with, or who are in your safety "bubble" of no more than 10 people. If you and your new partner would like to explore the sexual side of your relationship, there are other ways to do so virtually while maintaining your distance.

3. If you're partnered and not living together

If you are in a relationship and living apart or you have an intimate partner who does not live with you, it's important to follow physical distancing guidelines despite its real challenges. Consider using this time as an opportunity to focus on nurturing the emotional intimacy in your relationship — focusing on each other's needs and dreams, and supporting each other during this unprecedented time in your lives. This can happen virtually or outdoors at a distance, while enjoying the warm weather.

There are also other ways you can engage in intimate expression in your relationship while maintaining your distance. Keep in mind that you are your own safest sexual partner. Masturbation does not increase your risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

If both parties are interested, comfortable and consent to it, explore incorporating technology into your sex life. Be mindful of risks associated with security and confidentiality with the use of technology and only proceed with what you are comfortable with. Fantasize, allow your imagination to guide you, and use the anticipation to your advantage. Remind yourself that the more diligent we are with physical distancing, the sooner we can tackle the pandemic.










4. If you're partnered and living together

If you and your intimate partner live together, already share a bed and show no signs or symptoms of illness, your risk of exposure is unlikely to change if you engage in intimate activity. It is recommended that you continue to engage in diligent hand washing and wash any sex toys used with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after use.

If you or your partner who you live with fall within a high-risk group (for example, a healthcare worker or someone with a high exposure to the public), the decision and level of risk you are comfortable with is up to you. We know that individuals can carry the virus before they show symptoms, while some carriers may not show symptoms at all. Therefore, it is possible that engaging in close contact and intimacy will spread the virus. There are currently no specific guidelines on this, so it depends on you and your partner's comfort, risk tolerance and boundaries.



Summer Safety Checklist

-  Use virtual care to triage various summer ailments (sunburns, insect bites, scrapes and cuts, sprains, etc.) on-demand and from anywhere
-  Assess your own mental health every day, and start a virtual care consult if you have concerns
-  Stay more than two metres away from others when exercising outside (droplets can linger in others' pathways)
-  Avoid playgrounds, even for adult exercise use
-  As public pools and splash pads reopen, continue to practice physical distancing within the pool and on the deck; take extra care to avoid touching your face, and launder towels after every use
-  Stay hydrated all day long
-  Don't leave your house without hand sanitizer and a mask
-  BYOS (bring your own stuff) when gathering for a physically-distanced social occasion. This includes drinkware, cutlery, plates and napkins.
-  If you plan to share food with others, choose single-serve items like pre-sliced loaves, muffins or individual baked goods, energy bites or pre-skewered fruit or veggie kebabs. This allows you to avoid unnecessary touching and sharing serving utensils.

