



Benefits of Exercising in the Outdoors

There are many benefits to exercising outdoors. During the COVID-19 lockdown, the UK began to exercise more outdoors. This report will outline the top benefits to exercising outdoors and will give you information on how to start exercising outdoors.

Benefits:

It's good for your mental health:

- It helps with your self-esteem, as little as 5 minutes of walking or cycling near greenery or water, has been proven to boost self-esteem.
- It helps to improve mood and reduce depression and anger. Exercising outdoors has been proven to be a natural antidepressant.
- It is particularly good for those with seasonal affective disorder (SAD), depression and anxiety because sunshine increases a hormone that affects your mood- serotonin
- Exercise itself releases endorphins, which is a hormone which makes you feel good

It has other benefits to your health:

- Exercising outdoors helps to increase your Vitamin D levels. Those who are overweight are more likely to be Vitamin D deficient
- Exercise can help to lower blood pressure and release tension caused by stress
- The air outside is considered as cleaner than inside, where pollution levels can be worse than outdoors in large cities. This will benefit your lung health.

- Outdoor exercise is also exercise for your mind. Your mind is aware of the changing surroundings when you exercise outdoors which does not happen when you exercise indoors
- The constant change in terrain makes the outdoors a more challenging environment for your body to work out in, making you exercise harder

It's free! To exercise outdoors you do not have to pay for a membership. All you need to use is your body weight and you have a variety of places where you can exercise; whether that be a pavement, a park, a mountain or a beach, there are numerous places you can work out that will not cost a penny!

You can connect socially:

- You can organise walking/running/cycling groups in your community and connect with your neighbours
- You can use exercise as a team building tool, for your family or to connect with the people at work
- Even if you choose to exercise by yourself, you will begin to see familiar faces. You can even make sure your route finishes somewhere in the community, like a local cafe where you can meet with people

Connect with nature: exercising outdoors can help you slow down and reconnect with nature. Most of us lead busy lives in busy places, so exercising outdoors can help you to reconnect with nature.

There are a number of steps that can help you to ***get started:***

Wear sun protection: even on the dull winter days, you can be exposed to sun rays, which can be harmful to your health if you're exposed too much. Make sure you wear sunscreen and take a hat and sunglasses if you need.

- ***Avoid extreme temperatures*** – exercising outdoors in extreme temperatures can be harmful to your health, especially in warmer temperatures where dehydration is a large risk
- ***Wear sun protection:*** even on the dull winter days, you can be exposed to sun rays, which can be harmful to your health if you're exposed too much. Make sure you wear sunscreen and take a hat and sunglasses if you need.

- **Drink water** – make sure you drink enough water prior to, and during exercise as even if you do not feel thirsty, your body could be dehydrated which can lead to collapse
- **Exercise early** – where possible, exercise early because it is harder to make excuses. As the day goes on it is easy to find excuses and avoid exercise
- **Get some good gear** – investing in some decent trainers will do wonders for your physical health as there will be less impact on your feet and joints. Also, if you plan to exercise every day, it may be worth investing in the right equipment to help you exercise in different weather, e.g. waterproof clothing
- **Take caution** – if you are exercising in busy built up areas, be careful especially when exercising around traffic and crossing roads, to try and avoid accidents. Also take care when surfaces are wet and when there is a change in terrain as you don't want to lose your footing

Benefits of Exercising Outdoors

Exercising outdoors can be fun! There are also many benefits to choosing to exercise in the outdoors:



It's great for your mental health!



It can reduce blood pressure and stress



It's free! No membership is required



It can be used to connect socially



It helps you connect with nature



More info at www.steppep.com