Getting Outside May Be the Key to Boosting Your Physical and Psychological Well-being

A recent study published in Scientific Reports revealed that spending 120 minutes a week outdoors can improve your health and psychological well-being. Remember, well-being refers to feeling good and living both safely and healthily. And, the concept of well-being can have implications on your overall quality of life, health and happiness.

What are the benefits of spending time outside?
Exercising in nature has been proven to improve one’s mental and physical health. Being outside also helps to promote higher vitamin D levels, a vitamin the body makes when skin is directly exposed to the sun. Many people are deficient in vitamin D, so exercising outside can be a great way to correct that.

In addition, outdoor activity can help you maintain a healthy weight, boost immunity and lower stress. Exercising outside can feel less routine than working out in a gym.

What counts as spending time outdoors?
Visiting town parks, greenspaces, woodlands and beaches all count as spending time outdoors. Here are two simple activities that you can do outside:

1. Walking or hiking—Hiking and walking have been proven to improve heart health and can help you maintain a healthy waistline.

2. Riding your bike—Riding a bike helps improve balance and endurance, and it’s an exercise that’s easy on your joints.

Be Prepared
Before you head outside and start improving your health today, you need to make sure that you’re properly prepared. This means that you should pack water, first-aid supplies, sun protection and, if you’re spending a significant amount of time outside, a healthy snack to help you refuel.
Apple Corn Chili

2 Tbsp. olive oil (divided)
8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast (cut to ½-inch cubes)
1 medium onion (chopped)
2 cloves garlic (minced)
1 15-ounce can corn (drained)
2 red apples (chopped, skin on)
1/2 Tbsp. ground cumin
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper (if desired)
1 15-ounce can black beans (drained and rinsed)
4 ½-ounce can diced green chiles (drained)
2 tsp. chicken bouillon
2 cups water
1/4 cup sour cream (reduced-fat)
1/4 cup fresh cilantro (chopped)

Preparations
1. In a stockpot, heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil. Add chicken and brown (about 5 minutes). Remove chicken from pan.
2. Heat remaining olive oil in same pot. Add onions and garlic, and sauté until soft.
3. Add corn and sauté until golden brown. Add apples, cumin and cayenne pepper (if desired). Cook about 3-4 minutes. Let cool about 5 minutes.
4. Set aside about 1 cup of mixture. Purée remainder in food processor or blender, adding a portion of water, if needed, and return to pot.
5. Add browned chicken, black beans, chiles, bouillon and water. Bring to boil and simmer about 15 minutes. Chicken should be cooked to 165 F.
6. To serve, ladle soup in bowls and top with nonpuréed portion of apple-corn mixture, sour cream and cilantro.

Nutritional Information (per serving; 6 total)
- Total Calories: 360
- Total Fat: 11 g
- Protein: 20 g
- Carbohydrates: 48 g
- Dietary Fiber: 9 g
- Saturated Fat: 3 g
- Sodium: 140 mg
- Total Sugars: 15 g

Source: USDA

Making Smart Food Choices at a Restaurant

Eating healthy doesn’t always mean sacrificing your favorite meals. Although it may not seem like it, you can still stay on track with your diet when enjoying a meal out with friends and family.

Since restaurants—especially fast food chains—tend to use more fat, salt and sugar than home-cooked meals, you just need to be smart about what you order from the menu. To make it simple, here are some things to keep in mind next time you’re eating out:

- Avoid fried and carb-heavy options, like fried chicken or macaroni and cheese.
- Watch your portion size, as many restaurants give you more than one serving.
- Be mindful of your beverage choice, since there are many hidden calories in sugary sodas and alcoholic drinks.

A Handy Guide to Portion Control

- A serving of protein should be the size of the palm of your hand.
- A serving of carbs should be the size of your fist.
- A serving of vegetables should be an open handful.

September: National Preparedness Month

Since 2004, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the national Ready Campaign have promoted National Preparedness Month (NPM) every September. NPM encourages Americans to take steps to prepare for all types of emergencies and strives to increase the overall number of people, families and communities that engage in preparedness actions.

The 2019 Theme is “Prepared, Not Scared.” Visit https://www.ready.gov/september to learn more about NPM the tools which support their weekly themes.