



Make the Most of Spring Weather

It's springtime in North Texas! The days are getting longer and warmer, grass is greener, birds are singing, and spring flowers are in full, spectacular bloom. After a long winter indoors – due to cold weather and the pandemic – now is a great time to reap the physical and mental health benefits of spending time outside.

Studies have repeatedly shown that spending time in nature can have a positive effect on mental health, including boosting mood and helping to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. There are also physical health benefits from even moderate outdoor activity, such as burning calories, using your muscles, and a getting a better night's sleep.

Spring's mild temperatures make it the ideal time to enjoy your favorite outdoor activities — or to try new ones. So, keeping COVID-19 precautions in mind, it's time to get out there and enjoy this beautiful season and all it has to offer, such as:

Fishing

Fishing is a fun, affordable way to spend time outdoors alone or with family and friends. It can also help build upper body strength and increase dexterity. In Texas, a fishing license is required of anyone 17 and older fishing in public waters. You can try fishing for free (without a license) at one of the Texas State Parks “Learn to Fish” events.

Take a Stroll

Power walking is great aerobic exercise, but even a leisurely stroll has positive health benefits. Walking is a safe exercise for most people and can help improve balance (which helps reduce falls). Lace up some supportive shoes and head outdoors. Of course, watch where you’re going and pause to take note of any new flowers that have recently bloomed or birds you may hear chirping in the trees.

Pack a Picnic

If you want to socialize with family or friends who have not yet been vaccinated for COVID-19, an outdoor gathering at a park is a great way to do that. Enjoy an outdoor lunch on a picnic blanket, while catching up with loved ones and enjoying the fresh, springtime air. Make your picnic even more special by packing some seasonal fruits or vegetables or a board game to play.

Yard Work

Tidying up your front or back yard might sound like a chore, but it’s also excellent exercise and a productive way to spend a morning or afternoon. Now is also a great time to plant annuals that will keep your garden colorful all summer long, such as lantana, periwinkle and zinnia.

Plant a Vegetable Garden

It’s not too late to plant your summer vegetable garden. Consider some of these summer favorites: black eyed peas, okra, corn, cucumbers, squash, melons, pumpkins or zucchini. You’ll enjoy the therapeutic power of tending your garden and watching it grow and will reap the rewards with fresh, healthy food for your table.

As with all outdoor activities, be sure to stay hydrated, wear sunscreen, and be careful not to overdo it. Aim to spend time outdoors most days of the week, if possible, rather than one long day. Enjoying all that spring has to offer is a great way to take care of your mind, body and spirit.

