

Braving the Heat While Exercising

Summer heat can be extreme. So you might wonder how you and your family can safely maintain a healthy level of physical activity while coping with the hot weather.

It is tempting to stay indoors in the cool air conditioning when it is hot. That can lead to sitting too much and possibly over eating. So how can families keep cool while getting outside and staying active?

There are ways to stay active and be outdoors exercising.

1. One of the best ways to cope with the heat is to drink lots of cool fluids. Water is the best choice, but there is also 100 percent fruit juice and sports drinks with electrolytes. A good rule when exercising in the heat is to take frequent breaks about every 15 to 20 minutes to stay hydrated.
2. Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing and a hat, cap or visor. Also use sunscreen.
3. If exercising outside, do so in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler.
4. Eat foods with high water content such as cucumbers, berries or melons before you work out. Have a salty snack such as nuts after the workout to replace salt lost through sweating.
5. If it is too hot outside, you family can enjoy a great indoor workout. Use dumbbells, do lunges and squats, or dance to get a workout in the comfort of your own home.
6. Gradually increase the duration of your workout such as 15 minutes the first couple of days, then adding 5 minutes every two or three days until you are exercising 45 minutes to an hour.
7. Listen to your body. If you feel the need to stop, stop.

These steps can help you stay fit, even during the long, hot days of summer.

Adapted from The American Heart Association and <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.