



Great Outdoors Month

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Information Source:
<https://bluemoonrising.org/10-ways-to-celebrate-national-great-outdoors-month/>

Information Source:
<http://unionsportsmen.org/11-great-outdoors-month-activities/>

Picture Source:
<https://frontiergroup.org/blogs/blog/fg/navigating-new-normal-how-nature-keeps-us-grounded-world-turned-upside-down>
<https://www.yourpickenscounty.com/june-is-great-outdoors-month/>

Summer is one of the best times to escape the indoors and connect with nature, and June just so happens to be Great Outdoors Month! We’ve compiled a list of various outdoor activities that you can enjoy with your family and friends, not only during Great Outdoors Month but all summer long– so get ready for some summertime adventures!

Here are 7 activities to do outdoors with your family, friends or by yourself.

-Biking: An activity for the whole family, a bike ride can propel an adventure to the next level. With a breeze on your face and the sun at your back, a bike ride is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and improve your health at the same time!

-Camping: This is a great way to spend some quality time in nature. Enjoy being on the land and off the grid. Camping can range from rustic to “almost home” as you like, but do whatever suites you and your lifestyle.

-Conservation: Like our own Master Naturalists, there’s no better way to give back to Mother Nature than being a good steward and protecting the well-being of the forests, waterways and wildlife. Celebrate the great outdoors as a volunteer and help clean up, educate visitors, and protect the environment at local parks and recreation areas.

-Hiking: Texas prides itself on some beautiful parks and vistas accessible only on foot. Hikers can find themselves in places where traces of mankind are scarce, but nature leaves a big impression. To prepare for a hike, pack plenty of water and snacks since many trails don’t offer services.

-Grilling: Hosting a backyard cookout is a great way to enjoy nature and time with family and friend in your own backyard.

-Plant a vegetable garden: Collect some seeds from your local gardening center, claim a plot in the backyard, and start digging with your friends . In due time, you'll have a sufficient source of yummy produce anytime you want. Once your first harvest is picked, be sure to invite those who helped you plant it over for a homecooked meal.

-Fishing. No boat? No problem. You can fish from the bank of a lake or pond near you, just make sure to get a fishing license.

Returning to Work Post Covid-19

Returning to work after six weeks under the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown can cause differing amounts of emotions – disbelief, fear and even anger – among workers, much like after a disaster.

But employers and co-workers alike can watch for signs of emotional impact over the coming weeks and months to ensure everyone is finding their way back to a new normal, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist.

When states, cities and workplaces begin reopening, COVID-19 won't be gone, nor will the concerns that surround it, said Miquela Smith, AgriLife Extension health specialist, Amarillo.

Some workers will gladly head back to their offices and places of business, while others will do so with trepidation, Smith said.

Returning to work

Many Americans with management and professional occupations will be able to continue working from home, while those with service, production and maintenance-related jobs will have to physically return to work, she said. Employees who can continue to work from home will inherently be at a lower risk of exposure to the virus compared to those who cannot.

Minimizing employees' potential exposure to COVID-19 must be a top priority," Smith said. "The CDC offers resources on their website for businesses and employers to help them prepare to safely reopen. Reopening businesses will come with challenges and people will respond differently to being back at work."

Some people may have lost loved ones or know someone who got sick, so it will hit close to home, Smith said. Others may have anxiety about returning to work safely; or about finding safe daycare for their children, who are not returning to school. Others will be tired of being at home and will welcome the opportunity to go about life as if nothing is happening.

"Each of our lives have been altered and directly impacted by this crisis," she said. "Crisis situations affect people differently and just because a person is not responding to the pandemic in the way you think they should, does not mean they are unaffected. Returning to work after a pandemic is new territory for all of us, and we must have patience with ourselves and others while we navigate the process."



Emotional stress and well-being

Employers and workers should watch for signs of emotional impact over the coming weeks and months. Signs someone may be struggling in their return to the workplace include changes in performance and productivity, such as missing deadlines, calling in sick frequently, absenteeism, irritability and anger, difficulty concentrating and making decisions, withdrawal from work activity, and difficulty with work transitions or changes in routines.

"While each business will dictate how they come back online and what will be expected of their employees, it is important to remind them that support among colleagues can help employees work through difficulties," Smith said.

Initially, it may also be important to reconsider travel needs, as employees, clients and other individuals may be hesitant to make business trips for some time. Consider postponing or canceling upcoming conferences and other meetings that require travel.

Do's and don'ts upon returning to work

Key messages Smith offered for individuals to help facilitate a safe return to the workplace include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, work meetings and travel. Continue to follow guidelines from state and local authorities for using face coverings in public spaces.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your work area, including keyboards, phones, handrails and doorknobs.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

Source:
<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/05/01/returning-to-work-post-covid-19/>

Mindful Living: Digital Awareness

Being mindful of technology encourages healthy connections with oneself and others rather than losing yourself in mobile devices. It also helps to refocus your concentration to be present by avoiding compulsive use of technology.

WHY BE MINDFUL?

Technology changed the way we approach our work and daily activities. The average person checks their phone several times a day. Time spent on digital devices has replaced our time spent on exercise, bonding, and creative activities e.g. playing an instrument, brain games, enjoying family meals and playing outdoors.

Highly stimulating screen-based activities, the bright lights from digital devices, and the constant urge to check our phones for texts, phone calls or emails can become repetitive and compulsive, which may induce stress and disrupt sleep. Being mindful of technology use allows meaningful face-to-face interactions and conversations.

HOW TO BE MINDFUL

A digital detox will help you unplug and disconnect from technology and to reconnect with friends and family.

Have a morning routine without your phone or other digital devices. Allow at least an hour each day of screen-free time.

Take breaks from social media to go outdoors to exercise or connect with the real world. Turn off social media notifications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram.

Encourage screen-free family meals to reconnect with family members and focus on what is served. Avoid screens in your bedroom and do not use any screen 1 hour before bedtime.

Stretch your body every 30 minutes while using your computer and focus on natural objects that are restful to the eyes.

Avoid talking or texting while driving. Distracted driving is dangerous so always stay focused on the road.



Source: Sumathi Venkatesh, PhD, David Leal, MPA, Julie Tijerina, MBA -Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, . Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences website: <http://fcs.tamu.edu/>

Picture Source: <https://www.livehappy.com/lifestyle/are-you-phone-snobber?nopaging=1>

Italian Artichoke Chicken

Ingredients:

- 6 4-ounce chicken breast, skinless and boneless
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 5-6 Roma tomatoes cored and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 14-ounce can of quartered artichoke hearts, drained
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- fresh basil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Arrange raw chicken breasts in a 9x11 casserole dish. Season with Italian seasoning, set aside.
2. In a large bowl mix together tomatoes, garlic and drained artichoke hearts. Add extra virgin olive oil, sugar, and flour. Mix well.
3. Pour the tomato and artichoke mixture over the chicken. Cover with foil and place in preheated oven, bake for 35-40 minutes.
4. Remove from oven and uncover. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese over the top and place the chicken under the broiler for a few minutes until the cheese is golden brown and the vegetables are caramelized.
5. Remove from oven and top the hot dish with chopped basil.
6. Serve over your favorite pasta or pair chicken with a fresh spinach salad....or do both!

Nutrition Facts

Serves: 6
1 Serving contains:
260 Calories Per Serving
10 Grams of Total Fat
(1.5 g of Saturated Fat)
90 mg of Cholesterol
32g of Protein



Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>

County News

Things are slowly starting to move back to normal for AgriLife Extension. We will begin to slowly start implementing face to face programming, but with some restrictions.

Save the Date!
Do Well Be Well with Diabetes
August 13, 18, 20, 25, and 27
More details will be released as the date gets closer!

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