

# Stay Active and Safe This Summer

*(From May 2013 newsletter)*

After a severe winter and cold spring, warm weather is finally here! That means it's time to get outside and get active! Before too long, the weather will turn from pleasantly warm to hot and humid. That's no reason to curtail your physical activity – here are a few tips for exercising in the heat:

- **Exercise in the morning or in the evening** when temperatures are lower and the sun not so hot.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of fluid before and after your activity, and carry a water bottle with you. Don't wait till you are thirsty to drink.
- **Protect your skin and eyes:** Use a sunblock that protects against both UVA and UVB rays at a level of SPF 30. Wear a hat that protects your face ears and neck. Wear lightweight clothing that covers your skin (some clothing even has SPF protection in it nowadays). Finally, wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- **Consider an inside walk:** On brutally hot days, it may be better to head indoors. Local fitness centers offer everything from yoga to tennis. Walkers can go to local malls in the community, as well as the ARC, CRCE and the Armory on campus.
- **Walk or bike in the woods:** Local parks provide hiking and mountain bike trails with shade.
- **Exercise in water:** The water will help keep you cooler. Water activities include swimming, water aerobics and deep water jogging. You still need to protect your skin from the sun and stay hydrated. Campus Recreation has two great pools for aquatic exercise.
- **Pace yourself:** It's important to listen to your body when it's hot outside. Take breaks if you need them. Stop if you are not feeling well.

In most cases, you can exercise very safely in the heat using these precautions. Still, it is important to know the signs of heat illness, just in case:

- **Heat cramps:** Heat cramps are painful muscle contractions. They mostly affect the calves, quadriceps and abdominals. Affected muscles may feel firm to the touch. Your body temperature may be normal.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Symptoms of heat exhaustion include headache, dizziness, nausea, or cool, moist, pale skin. Move to a cooler place, stop exercising and cool down immediately by dousing yourself with cold water and re-hydrating. You may need to seek medical attention.
- **Heat stroke:** Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Symptoms include vomiting, decreased alertness or loss of consciousness, rapid but weak pulse, rapid but shallow breathing, and perhaps moist skin. Heat stroke is life threatening and requires emergency help. Call 9-1-1 and get to a cooler place.

Certain medical conditions or medications can increase your risk of a heat-related illness. If you plan to exercise in the heat, talk to your doctor about precautions.

If you develop any of the above symptoms, you must lower your body temperature and get hydrated. Stop exercising immediately and get out of the heat. If possible, have someone stay with you who can help monitor your condition. Remove extra clothing or sports equipment. Drink fluids such as water or a sports drink. If possible, fan your body or wet down your body with cool water. If you don't feel better within 30 minutes, contact your doctor. If you have signs of heatstroke, seek immediate medical help.

A note to dog walkers: Don't forget your furry walking companion can get overheated and dehydrated as well. If you are taking your dog walking keep him or her hydrated and cool as well.

So don't let sizzling temperatures put a fizzle in your physical activity routine. With a little advance planning, you can stay active all summer long!