

Healthy Aging

3 Safe Senior Exercise Options For Summer

(NAPS)—Sunshine and warm weather have many people thinking about new workout options. If you're ready to kickstart your fitness routine—but want to do so safely—consider these three simple tips:

1. Check in with your gym about its COVID-safe offerings. Many Americans who have been avoiding public places this past year are now looking to expand their horizons, including going back to a gym. Growing numbers of gyms now offer outdoor workout spaces that include many of the weight training and aerobics equipment choices you previously enjoyed indoors—treadmills, stair climbers, weight machines, free weights—and even outdoor classes. Outdoors or indoors, many gyms continue to maintain at least six feet between each workout station, require masks within the space, and provide free hand sanitizer, clean equipment assurances and other COVID-safe protocols. Give your gym a call or visit the location to find out what specific COVID-safe guidelines are in place there, so you can determine whether you're ready to resume your gym routine.

2. Increase your outdoor exercise routine. After being cooped up for months, getting outside can work wonders for your physical health and emotional well-being. Take yourself to a park to explore a new walking or hiking path. There are several apps that



Now's the time to kickstart your summer exercise routine. Pair up with a friend for extra fun and motivation.

can locate hiking trails near you. Challenge a friend to a regular game of tennis, pickleball or bocce ball. Or dust off your bicycles and enjoy the freedom of feeling the wind in your faces. Establishing a fun exercise routine with a friend can motivate you to keep it up and help lift your spirits. Older adults reported increased feelings of isolation last year. Exercising with a friend can help you shake off the loneliness blues.

Being outdoors offers the added benefit of providing you with a dose of vitamin D. Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium and to enhance bone health and immune system function. Regularly spending time outdoors is the most natural way to get the recommended 10 to 30 minutes of sun exposure several times a week. Just don't forget to put on sunscreen.

3. Augment your workout with home exercise classes. National guidelines recommend that you get at least 150 minutes per week of exercise. To make sure you're meeting that, augment your workout routine with home exercise classes that you can view on your laptop, phone or other devices. For best results, mix things up. Incorporate cardio exercise classes with strength training videos that use resistance bands or free weights. If you want to improve balance or flexibility, try a yoga or tai chi class. Popular options such as the Silver&Fit Healthy Aging and Exercise program offer a wide range of free online classes specially designed for older adults. Classes premiere daily on Facebook Live from 8 AM to 4 PM Pacific time, 6 days a week. You can join the scheduled classes at <https://www.facebook.com/SilverandFit> to enjoy engaging live with other online viewers. Or you can view the replays on YouTube at a time that's convenient to you. You'll find them at: www.youtube.com/silverandfit.

Now can be your time to get back into a fitness routine—or start a new one. Find workout options that you love and that motivate you to stick with them. Then make the most of the season. As always, before you start any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to discuss your goals and what types of exercise might be safest for you.