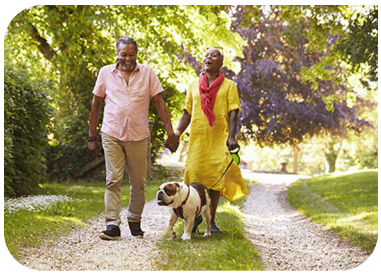
Visit the Teladoc Medical Experts website for more information

Meet me outside: Switch up your fitness routine

The arrival of spring means the days are getting longer and the chill is wearing off. This milder environment gives you the chance to get out and shake off the winter doldrums.

In addition to simply getting fresh air, there are real health benefits to enjoying the outdoors. Being outside, especially in green space:[1]

- Lowers stress levels and reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.
- Boosts your creativity and mental processing abilities.
- Can reduce cortisol levels (a stress marker). It can also regulate heart rate and blood pressure, possibly leading to a lower risk of heart disease.



And if your indoor workouts feel stale, consider taking them outside. Besides improving your fitness, you get additional benefits from exercising outdoors.

The outdoors are great

The benefits of regular physical activity are numerous. When you move your exercises outside, you could:

Work out longer

By enjoying your environment, you may spend extra time or effort exercising without even realizing it.

Up vitamin D

We can soak up the "sunshine vitamin" naturally, boosting our vitamin D levels from being in the sun.

Improve your attention

Walking just 20 minutes in nature refreshes your brain's ability to focus.

Sleep more soundly

Exposure to daylight and fresh air helps improve sleep quality. The physical activity helps too.

Boost your workouts

Re-energize your workouts by switching up the scenery.

Take your spinning outdoors onto a bike path.

Rather than running on the treadmill for miles, log them over hills and valleys.

Go for a hike on a local trail

Ditch the rowing machine and go for a paddle in a kayak, canoe or rowboat.

Take your body weight exercises or resistance training into the park.

Simply spend your free time walking in the sun.

Refresh your fitness and yourself. It's safe to say you almost always feel better after being outside and completing a workout.

Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your care provider to make sure it's safe.

[1]https://parks.canada.ca/voyage-travel/experiences/sante-health

Celebrate the small wins along the way

Big goals don't happen all at once. They start with small steps.

Maybe you want to read more books. It begins with opening the first page. Maybe you want to keep your home tidy. It starts with putting one thing away. Even learning a new hobby begins with trying it for the first time.

Each little win is worth celebrating. They can help you feel proud of yourself and give you the confidence to keep going.

Success feels good

Small wins could be as simple as checking off an item on your to-do list. It's that easy. And as a bonus, when you create a sense of accomplishment, you get a release of dopamine, a brain chemical that makes you feel good.[1] Once you have this good feeling, your body wants to feel it again, so you're encouraged to finish more tasks or take additional steps toward your big goals. This leads to success bringing more success.

Set yourself up for the best outcomes

Planning out how you want to accomplish your goals will help you stay on the path to success.[1]

1. **Create a clear vision of what you want to accomplish**
   Keep it simple and concise—something as clear as for example: "I want to feel more active this month," or "I want to spend more time outside."

2. **Break it down into milestones to hit**
   Think about specifics, like "I will take one 30-minute walk" or "I will stretch for 10 minutes each morning." and so on. When you hit one of these mini-goals, claim a reward. Take a walk. Call a friend. Choose something you enjoy that is different from your everyday activities.

3. **Chart your progress**
   Remember the task-and-reward charts from school or the ones you use with your own children? Receiving a star was huge! While simply earning stars once worked, the adult version should be a bit more complex. Consider keeping a "work" diary where you:
   - Record small wins
   - Chart out challenges and obstacles
   - Brainstorm ways to solve problems
   - Re-read it to learn from wins and losses and keep perspective

   This work diary will document your journey toward reaching big goals.

4. **Find support**
   Rather than announcing your big goal to anyone who will listen, find one or two people you trust. Know that these people are the ones to turn to for support.

5. **Stick with it**
   Everyone experiences setbacks—it's a natural part of working toward any kind of goal.[1] What matters is how you recover from a derailment. There is no shame in starting over or taking a step back.

A celebration is a celebration. Big or small, you deserve to enjoy your accomplishments.

[1]https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22581-dopamine

Seasonal allergies are coming: Survival tips

When the snow melts and temperatures rise, many Canadians welcome longer days and warmer weather. But for those with seasonal allergies, rising pollen levels can bring runny noses, itchy eyes, scratchy throats and a foggy feeling that makes it harder to enjoy the Spring season.

In Canada,
about 1 in 4 people
experience seasonal allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis.[1]

What can you do about allergies?

Treatments for seasonal allergies are highly effective. There are many over-the-counter medications and prescriptions that work well. Talk to your healthcare provider before taking any new medicine. There are also lifestyle changes you can make to ease symptoms.

Knowing your triggers and avoiding allergens is the first step. Your care provider may recommend treatments or medications to control inflammation and manage symptoms.

Over-the-counter allergy treatments[2] include:

Antihistamines
These block the production of histamine, relieving runny noses, itching and sneezing.

Decongestants
These can reduce stuffiness. This helps make it easier to breathe.

Corticosteroids
These reduce inflammation and help control itching, sneezing and nasal symptoms.

Saline eye drops
Moisture from eye drops and nasal sprays helps ease itchy eyes and nasal passages.

Simple lifestyle changes include:

Staying hydrated to support your immune system and overall health.

Checking your local allergy forecast to be prepared. You can check pollen levels online or by using your favourite weather app. Know which activities to avoid and when.

Getting enough sleep—the recommended seven to nine hours each night—to support your immune system and keep you energised.

Managing stress through physical activity, mindfulness, music, writing or other creative outlets to reduce the risk of a weakened immune system.

Balancing nutrition by including ccolourful fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains for a wide variety of vitamins and minerals.

Support your immune system

Consider the following to help naturally boost your immune system:[3]

Beta-carotene
Try sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mangos, grapes, peaches and more.

Vitamin C
Eat citrus fruits, berries, melons, tomatoes, bell peppers and broccoli.

Vitamin D
Eat fatty fish, eggs, fortified milk and other dairy products.

Zinc
Try beef, seafood, wheat germ, beans, nuts and tofu.

Probiotics
Include cultured dairy products like yogurt and kefir, and fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, miso and tempeh.

Protein
Find it in milk, yogurt, eggs, beef, chicken, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans and lentils.

Honey
Contains antimicrobial agents with potential health benefits. It can also help soothe sore throats and coughs.

Golden latte

Makes: 1 serving | Prep: 3 min | Cook: 5 min

Try this warm and toasty drink as an after-dinner treat.

Ingredients

- 1 cup unsweetened, low-fat milk of your choice
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground cardamom
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp honey (or maple syrup)

Preparation

Whisk ingredients together in a small saucepan over low heat until heated through and frothy. A hand-held frother can be used in place of a whisk.

Nutrition

Per serving

Calories: 125 | total fat: 3 g | saturated fat: 0 g | sodium: 102 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 25 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars:11 g | protein: 3 g | potassium: 437 mg

[1]https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6121311
[2]https://asthma.ca/get-help/allergies-and-asthma/allergy-treatments/
[3]https://cdhf.ca/en/how-nutrition-can-support-gut-health-and-the-immune-system/

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