

5 Heart-Smart Fall Activities

By Jo Cavallo

Here are five ways to help you enjoy the outdoors this autumn and stay heart fit.

If the record-breaking heat kept you cooped up indoors this summer, the cool, crisp days of autumn give you the perfect excuse to spend time outside.

The days may be getting shorter, but that shouldn't keep you from enjoying fun fall activities, just remember to dress for the weather and the activity you have planned. And while you might not feel the need to drink as much water as you do during the summer months, staying properly hydrated in the cooler months is just as important as it is during the blazing heat of summer.

Here are five ways to help you enjoy the outdoors this autumn *and* stay heart fit.

1. **Bicycling:** What better way to enjoy the brilliant colors of autumn and get in some heart-healthy aerobic exercise than a bicycle ride through your favorite nature trail? To reap the greatest heart benefits, try biking for at least 30 minutes, three to four times a week. Biking strengthens the heart and lungs and raises your body's ability to use oxygen.
2. **Turn Fall Chores into a Heart Workout:** Raking leaves and gardening are endurance activities that help improve your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. Plus, they have the added benefit of burning around 150 calories every 30 minutes.
3. **Participate in Autumn Activities:** Taking part in fall harvesting activities like apple and pumpkin picking gives you the ideal opportunity to get in some moderate-intensity exercise to boost heart health. Plus, pumpkins are packed with antioxidants like vitamins A, C, E, K and beta-carotene, which can lower the risk of cardiovascular disease. And apples are a power fruit that may help lower cholesterol and reduce your risk for high blood pressure.
4. **Trailblazing:** Walking and hiking for just 30 to 60 minutes three or four times a week can significantly reduce your risk for heart problems, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Brisk hiking and walking have been linked to decreases in both cholesterol and blood pressure levels. And walking and hiking are great ways to burn calories. According to the American Heart Association, a person weighing 150 pounds can burn 240 calories after just one hour of walking or hiking.
5. **Horseback Riding:** Riding is a great way to enjoy the fall scenery while getting a cardio workout. Riding is an aerobic exercise that strengthens your heart and lungs and helps you burn about 380 calories per hour.

Sources:

Livestrong.com. "10 Tips for Fall Fitness". Web.

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/98340-tips-fall-fitness/>