Summertime Health & Exercise: Beating the Heat

Time passes so quickly sometimes that seasons often take us by surprise. Never is it more apparent than the first hint of warm weather that reminds us how long it’s been since we’ve been outside participating in some form of exercise. Warm weather brings a renewed interest in those New Year’s Resolutions we made so long ago, and perhaps stopped working towards this goal sometime during the dreary winter months.

Pretty much anything that can be done indoors, can also be done outside, yet provides more fun, burns more calories and offers so much more freedom and versatility.

Exercising outdoors has many benefits that include:
- Little or no equipment needed to get a good workout
- No need to put on makeup or special clothing to work out in a gym
- Vitamin D enhancing sunshine for our skin
- The ability to workout anytime, anywhere – even on vacation
- Fresh Air!

Lunges
Like all exercises, lunges should be done with form, and when done correctly it will work every single muscle in your legs at some point throughout the movement, and also working the gluteus maximus.

Push Ups
Push-ups have always been one of the most effective upper body exercises.

Squats
Many people simply don’t understand the incredible power of doing a squat the right way. Try doing 10-20 squats perfectly formed and see how tired your legs are!

Step Ups
Using an elevated surface to step up on and then simply step back down and repeating while alternating each leg back and forth. This maximizes the use of all leg muscles and is a great cardiovascular workout as well.
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While it is very important to exercise, it is just as important to be aware of a heatstroke. Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency. A heatstroke victim may develop headache, personality changes, confusion, rapid heartbeat, rapid and shallow breathing, elevated or lowered blood pressure, slurred speech, dizziness, fainting, or seizures.

Heatstroke normally develops when the person becomes so dehydrated that the skin no longer sweats and is hot and dry to touch.

What increases risk of a heatstroke?
- Exercising outdoors
- Dehydration – very important to make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids while outside at all times
- Heavy clothing
- Obesity
- Age 65+
- High outdoor humidity
- Medical conditions including but not limited to alcoholism, cardiovascular disease, skin or sweat gland issues that inhibit the ability to sweat, COPD, diabetes, hyperthyroidism, hypokalemia (Potassium deficiency), infections that cause fever

Steps to preventing heatstroke:
- Take it easy and don’t over exert yourself.
- When exercising on hot/humid days, do so early in the morning or late in the evening when it’s cooler outside
- Drink plenty of water in the summertime. Don’t rely on thirst to predict when you are to drink – if you are thirsty, then you are already somewhat dehydrated
- Wear a hat with a broad brim to protect you from the sun and loose clothing to allow the body to sweat

Steps to take if someone has a heatstroke:
- Secure medical attention immediately
- Move the victim to a cool, shady area.
- Cool the victim with wet clothes or ice
- If possible, give the victim fluids.

*You should consult with your physician or other health care professional before starting an exercise or diet regimen to determine if it is right for your needs. This is particularly true if you have a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or if you have experienced chest pain*