



Tri Fit's Healthy Habits

May's Goal

Enjoy the outdoors

Did you know that the average Canadian spends 90% of their time indoors and 6 hours in front of a screen? Getting outside and enjoying nature for as little as 30 minutes a day can have great benefits on your health, wellness, mood and productivity. Find out how you can incorporate more time outside and experience the benefits!

Share your outdoor activities on social media
#TriFitOutdoors



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Enjoy the great outdoors!

Did you know that the average Canadian spends 90% of their time indoors and six hours in front of a screen?

Nature deficiencies can have many negative consequences on one's health from obesity, stress, heart disease, asthma and depression; all of which are on the rise. Getting outside and enjoying nature for as little as 30 minutes a day can have many health benefits.



Research over the past number of years has continued to show that nature is good for our health. Share your outdoor experiences on social media using **#TriFitOutdoors**.

Those who spend more time outdoors realize the following benefits:

- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Lower risk of diabetes and heart disease
- Lower risk of colon cancer
- Increased Vitamin D production
- Weight loss and improved fitness
- Increased energy
- Increased curiosity, creativity and problem solving abilities
- Improved sleep
- More empathetic, have more meaningful relationships and are more involved in their communities

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The Challenge

This month, we challenge you to get outside and enjoy nature for at least 30 minutes each day. These 30 minutes do not need to be continuous and can be broken into three 10 minute slots or two 15 minute slots. However you choose to do it, it's up to you!

Here are some tips to help you in this month's challenge:

- *Nature is everywhere* – Getting out into nature doesn't mean going to a destination. Nature is right in your backyard, literally!
- *More than just getting outside* – We encourage you to use this time to do more than just simply getting outside. We want you to use this opportunity to relax and pay attention to nature and all that it offers.
- *Set an alarm* – Whether it is on your phone or your computer, give yourself a friendly reminder to get outside for even just a few minutes. This can also serve as a great opportunity to take a break at work.
- *Take your lunch outdoors* – With the weather getting nicer, use your lunch break as a time to get outside. Either in your backyard or at a park nearby, use your break to get some natural light.
- *Get the family involved* – Use the opportunity to involve the family. Spending time outside is great for everyone!
- *Leave the car behind* – Walk, bike or rollerblade the next time you need to go out.
- *Make it a habit* – It can take a few weeks for a habit to develop. Continue to push yourself to get outside for those 30 minutes each day until it becomes a habit.

Want to learn more? Visit David Suzuki's 30x30 challenge page: <http://30x30.davidsuzuki.org/>



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Get Outside and Explore!

Are you looking for an outdoor activity that's off the beaten track? Connect with friends and try city scavenger hunts, geocaching and bird-watching; a great way to get your 30 minutes outside and explore the great outdoors!

City Scavenger Hunt

Gather a group of friends, form a couple of teams and have fun while getting fit! A scavenger hunt starts and ends at a pre-determined spot while participants collect items or photos of items along the way. It's a good idea to establish a search perimeter, cut-off time and rules around safety and community etiquette. Examples of items to include on your task list are pictures of:



- Team member sitting on a bench
- Bus shelter or ticket booth
- Graffiti
- Restaurant menu
- Taxi
- Street sign

For more hunt ideas visit <http://www.scavenger-hunt-guru.com/city-hunt.html>

Geocaching

Geocaching is a great way to actively explore different neighbourhoods. Did you know that there are over two million geocaches worldwide? Participants track and attempt to find a hidden geocache (container with a log book and small items) using a [geocache app](#) and a smartphone GPS. Once found, geocachers sign the book, perhaps trade an item for one of equal or greater value and return the container to its hiding place. And it's on to the next cache! You can enter your postal code/zip on



<http://www.geocaching.com/seek/nearest.aspx> to find a list of geocaches near you.

<https://www.geocaching.com/guide/>

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Bird-Watching

Bird watching is a healthy way to explore and appreciate your outdoor environment. Start by visiting a book store or library and find a guide book such as Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds or The National Geographic's Birds of North America that will help you identify birds in your area. In addition you'll need a good pair of binoculars or "bins" and a notebook to record your sightings.



Mid-May is the best time to see the maximum number of birds. Set out in the morning when the birds are more active and set a goal to find 5-10 species and list them as you see them. Find a birding club or invite

friends to join you in this rewarding and active hobby. Remember that bird welfare comes first so avoid disturbing the birds and their habitats.

<http://cwf-fcf.org/en/discover-wildlife/resources/online-articles/bird-watching-a-healthy-happy-hobby.html>

<http://www.torontobirding.ca/site/page/view/information.faq#general>

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Outdoor Therapy

Canadians spend on average 50% less time outdoors than they did 50 years ago.

This lack of natural light affects our alertness, mood, productivity, sleep patterns and general health and well-being.

In Japan, outdoor therapy is called “Shinrin-Yoku” or “Forest Bathing” and involves spending time in a wooded area. This practice recognizes the power of nature in promoting peace of mind and relaxation. Measurable health effects after spending as little time as an hour in a forest setting include:

- Decrease in cortisol (stress hormone) levels
- Decrease in pulse rate and blood pressure
- Protection against anxiety and depression
- Increase in cells that boost the immune system

In the U.K. and Canada, where 1 in 5 individuals are affected by mental health issues, Eco therapy is used

as an effective therapy for those at higher risk for mental health issues. There is growing evidence that time spent outside in a natural setting has a positive effect, independent of physical activity, on mental health.

So what is Eco therapy? It is a regular non-risky activity in a natural outdoor environment that is facilitated, structured, involves other people and focuses on the activity rather than “health”. Although designed for an at-risk population, we can all benefit from these types of activities. Joining a group involved in community gardening, local nature trail maintenance, bird-watching or other outdoor pursuits can improve physical and mental health, provide social opportunities, add value to the task and help us connect with nature.

Check out outdoor opportunities in your area and embrace the power of nature!



Volunteers tending a section of the Bruce Trail, Ontario

<http://psychologyofwellbeing.com/201112/forest-bathing.html>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/travel/destinations/forest-bathing-not-just-a-walk-in-the-woods/article571471/>

<http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/ecotherapy/#.VPdIL5p0yP8>

<http://brucetrail.org/pages/volunteer>