



# WELLNESS CONNECTION

## How to Stay Active During the Hot Summer Months

For most of us, the summer sun and heat can present a significant barrier to exercise.



Summer temperatures can make even seemingly simple activities like taking a walk appear impossible. **However, physical activity is an important part of healthy living, as it can reduce stress, improve sleep quality, and boost cognition and mood.** Here are some tips that may help you keep up your physical activity levels, despite the balmy weather.

1. **Choose your exercise wisely.** Pick an activity that will not lend itself to overheating. Pool activities such as swimming, water aerobics, and other classes, and even walking in the shallow end of the pool can help you stay active while keeping you cool. Indoor exercise classes (except for yoga) often have very cold rooms to keep people cool as their body temperature rises. By choosing the right activity, you're also more likely to stick to your exercise goals.
2. **Timing is key.** Early afternoon is the hottest part of the day, so if you're going to exercise outdoors, try to avoid activity between noon through 3 p.m. Typically, mornings are cooler than evenings. Behaviorally, I recommend exercising first thing in the morning to help you start the day grounded and already feeling accomplished.

3. **Use cooling gear.** Dry-fit shirts and pants, cooling hats, cooling towels, and a lot of other equipment can be found at sporting goods stores and online. My favorite item is a cooling towel; it can serve as a sweat absorber and it stays cool for hours.
4. **Drink water, then drink more water.** It's important to remember that when it's hot outside, your body must remain hydrated to regulate your body temperature. Drink lots and lots of water before, during, and after exercise, and remember that even if you're in a pool and feel cool, you're still sweating.
5. **Take the fun indoors.** Last but not least, especially if you're not someone who is partial to exercising in classes and gyms, remember that movement and activity is really the goal. Find indoor activities that are fun and adventurous, or that give you a social outlet, but still require moving. Get creative as you think about what would make you happy, and keep you moving. Bowling, indoor racquetball, rock climbing, drum lessons, pottery classes, hula lessons, and going shopping are just a few activities to consider. Wear an activity tracker so you know what you've accomplished.



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## 4 Ways to Tame Tension Headaches



If you've ever had a tension headache, you know it can put a damper on your day. **This kind of headache usually develops in the afternoon, causing mild or moderate pain that may feel like dull tightness or a band of pressure.** Tension headaches occur when neck, shoulder, and scalp muscles become tense. Some people experience tension headaches from time to time; others get them more often. **While a tension headache is rarely debilitating, it can certainly make life miserable.**

If you have frequent tension headaches (more often than once or twice a week), here are some strategies that can help you to get rid of a headache.

1. **Pay attention to the basics.** Get enough sleep, don't skip meals, and be sure to pace yourself to avoid stress and fatigue.
2. **Relaxation techniques.** Physical and psychological relaxation therapies can help stave off tension headaches, so long as you practice these techniques

regularly. Physical approaches include applying a heating pad to your neck and shoulders to relax the muscles. Exercising these muscles also helps by strengthening and stretching them. Guided imagery exercises that help you focus your attention on various parts of your body to relax them and release tension and stress can also help.

3. **Biofeedback.** This relaxation technique requires special training but can help people avoid recurrent tension headaches. Typically, a therapist will attach electrodes to your skin to detect electrical signals from your neck and shoulder muscles. You then learn to recognize when you are becoming tense and practice ways to relax the muscles before they tighten so much that you develop a tension headache.
4. **Medical approaches.** Some people who have tension headaches are very sensitive in areas, known as trigger points, at the back of the neck or in the shoulders. Injecting a local anesthetic into these areas may eliminate the pain and prevent the headache from occurring again. Several medications can help keep tension headaches at bay. If non-drug therapies aren't giving you the relief you need, talk with your doctor about the medication options that might be right for you.

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## Health Tip: Staying Cool This Summer

By following the five tips below, you can beat the heat and prevent dehydration.

1. **Don't wait until you're thirsty.** Instead, drink small amounts of water throughout the day. Keep a water bottle or glass close as a reminder to continue drinking.
2. **Mix it up.** Water is the best source of hydration, but adding fruit or flavoring is an easy way to switch things up. Be careful with caffeinated beverages, like soda, coffee, or tea, as they can have a diuretic effect.



3. **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Liquids aren't the only source of hydration. Foods like strawberries, watermelon, cucumbers, celery, and lettuce also pack a powerful punch of hydration.
4. **Be conscious of bathroom trips.** Urine color tells us a lot about our hydration. In most cases, the lighter the color, the more hydrated you are. If you notice a darker color, it's time for some fluids.
5. **Talk to your physician about a hydration program.** Your physician can recommend using a hydration program for those with certain medications or diseases.

**Source:** <https://blog.encompasshealth.com>  
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