

Staying Active During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Staying safe while exercising outdoors

Being outdoors in nature for physical activity, like walking, running, or hiking, is allowed and encouraged during the stay safe order. Moving your body and getting fresh air can help you stay happy and healthy. Walking and bicycling outdoors are great ways to support your mental, emotional, and physical health needs, while following social distancing guidance.

Learn more about the **Benefits of Physical Activity**.

When exercising outdoors, remember to follow these basic guidelines:

- Stay at home if you feel sick or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Wash your hands when you leave and return home to protect yourself and others.
- Practice social distancing by staying at least six feet from others as much as possible while walking or biking. Look for new routes that are less crowded.
- Stick to parks and outdoor spaces close to your home. Think of new ways to explore your neighborhood!
- If you are planning to go to a park, ask your local parks and recreation office for closures or any changes to park facilities.
- Try not to touch things others may have touched—such as a staircase railing or a gate handle. Wash your hands right away when you get home.
- Bring along a facemask in case social distancing is not possible.
- Children can experience navigating their neighborhoods by walking and bicycling, and can learn how to more safely walk and bike by taking this fun [Walk! Bike! Fun! online course](#).
- If you want to improve your safe biking skills, visit the [Minnesota Bicycle Alliance](#) website to get a free Minnesota bicycling handbook.

If you can't be outdoors, stay active at home.

Ways to be active indoors

Being physically active is helpful for mind and body well-being. If you can't or don't want to go outside, here are some suggestions for being active indoors. Do your best to find time every day to move.

- Even in small spaces, walking is good for you. Consider pacing while on a phone call.
- Try to stand up and move around every 30 minutes or so, especially when you are watching TV or using a computer.
- Take activity breaks. Little amounts of physical activity, like cleaning, gardening, dancing, and cooking add up.
- Join a free online exercise class on YouTube. Cardio, yoga, strength training—the options are endless!
- Maintaining physical distance does not mean social distance—work out virtually with your friends. Plan to tune into the same exercise video or create a workout plan together over video chat.
- Stretch. Gentle movement, like yoga, can help your body relax and rejuvenate. Sync movement with deep breathing.

Support your physical and mental well-being by being active

The COVID-19 pandemic is stressful for all Minnesotans. Personal and family routines have changed, jobs and incomes impacted, and the existence of the virus itself causes concern for everyone. A proven way to help deal with that stress is through exercise and physical activity.

Here's why:

- Exercise reduces levels of the body's stress hormones.
- Exercise stimulates the production of chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators.
- Exercise helps to boost your immune system.
- The stress reduction and mental health benefits of physical activity and exercise can last throughout the day.

Here's how:

- Do your best to find time every day to move. Even a small amount of time each day is good for your health.
- Find the type of movement that works best for you. Physical activity, such as walking or biking, can be done by people of all ages and abilities. Find the type of exercise that works best for you.
- You can move safely outdoors in a number of ways. [Link to Staying Safe while Moving Outdoors.](#)
- Even if you are restricted to your home or yard, there are ways to exercise and maintain physical activity.