

5 Super Fun Ways to Enjoy an Active Staycation

Are you staying around town this summer instead of taking your usual vacation? If you do, you'll be in good company! Millions of families have found that staying close to home saves money, reduces stress, and provides plenty of active fun for everyone!

1. Get soaked at a spray park.

Many communities have new public facilities just waiting to be discovered, like spray or water parks. Make it a full day adventure by hiking or biking to/from the park. Pack a picnic with plenty of fruits and veggies - and be sure to bring lots of refreshing ice water. Pack non-water toys too (balls, jump ropes, Frisbees®, etc.) for some variety in your activity.

2. Set up a scavenger hunt.

The possibilities are only limited by your family's imagination! The items to be found can be real or digital (just a picture of something), simple (a rock) or complicated (a fossil). The list can also be as long or as short as you like. Need a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing? Look at the Scavenger Hunt instructions at www.hud.gov/kids/scavhunt.html.

3. Explore a local trail map.

This one could take a day or a week, depending on the extent of your trail system. Explore all the trails in a town or at nearby historical sites, wildlife refuges, and county parks. Let each family member pick the trail-of-the-day and plan a healthful picnic to fuel your adventures. Be sure to take plenty of silly family photos to document the memories.

4. Dance under the big sky.

Nearly everybody, from seniors to toddlers, likes to move to music, especially outdoors in the summertime. Check online or in the local paper for music festivals with dancing, like the free national event (www.nationalfolkfestival.com/2010/) in Butte, Montana. If you can't find what you want, plan your own block party with CDs and dancing for all ages.

5. Go for the gold with backyard Olympics.

Here's another staycation that could take an afternoon - or be extended over a week with different games in different places around your neighborhood or town. People can enter as individuals or as family teams. The types of events are unlimited. Maybe you'd like to include the 25-yard lawn crawl, a water balloon toss, a tug-o-war, or a limbo contest? There are also those 'real' Olympic sports, such as soccer, tennis, and ping pong.