



In this issue, Chinnor-based personal fitness trainer, Hilary Westall, recommends some al fresco exercise.

Spring outside for the summer



If you find it harder than usual to get yourself to the gym when the weather's warm and sunny, take heart. Everything you need for getting fit and working out is just beyond your front door, whether it's the local park, your garden, a nearby field or the pavements. So rather than giving up on that beach body and ditching your gym routine altogether, why not just step outside?

Exercising outdoors has a number of benefits including:

- It's free!
- Little or no equipment is required.
- No travel time to add in – exercise any time, anywhere.
- Out in the fresh air and daylight which can increase motivation.
- Don't have to deal with an intimidating, crowded gym or queues for the equipment.
- Mentally stimulating due to changing scenery and terrain.

There is a variety of outdoor activities you can participate in but the key is to find something you enjoy doing. To reap the health benefits and rewards of whichever form of exercise you choose, you need to do it at a level that gets your heart pumping for at least 30 minutes, three to four times per week. In other words, it needs to make you puff!

Walking

Versatile enough for nearly everyone, walking has always been a popular form of exercise. If you are very unfit, start out gently and build up speed and distance gradually. Having a training partner is generally more enjoyable and motivating than going it alone as you can spur each other on. Try to set some personal goals, for example timing how long it takes to get round a set route, then aiming

to reduce that time each week. Include some hill walking, which increases the challenge and targets the muscles in your bottom more than walking on the flat.

Running

Burning roughly 100 calories per mile and probably the best fat burning exercise around, running is great for weight loss, toning your legs and bottom and giving your heart and lungs an excellent workout. And who wants to run nowhere on a treadmill when the great outdoors can take you anywhere you choose? In addition, the constant variations in terrain are better for your joints than constant pounding on the same old surface.

If you start out sensibly and can get through the initial discomfort of first-time running, you'll quickly see the benefits to your fitness and body shape and your fitness will improve in leaps and bounds.

As a beginner, alternate walking with jogging for a total of about 20 minutes, gradually increasing your jogging time versus walking time. Again, having a training partner is ideal to keep you motivated and on track with your goals.

Cycling

Another big calorie burner when putting in the effort, cycling targets your lungs and legs and is something the whole family can get involved in. Always wear a helmet, and if your bike is suitable for riding off-road, arm yourself with a map and check out your local tracks and bridleways. Cycling can take you further afield than walking or running and is an enjoyable way to explore your local villages and nearby towns, perhaps taking in a decent pub lunch on the way! For the more ambitious cyclist, fast road biking provides a challenging workout and is truly exhilarating.

In addition to cardio-based activities, it is important to include strength training in your workout schedule at least twice a week. Make use of playgrounds, benches, picnic tables, stairs and hills where lunges, squats, step-ups, press-ups, tricep dips and abdominal work can all be performed without the need for weights and machines.

If exercising outdoors when the weather is particularly hot, try to keep a few things in mind:

- Avoid peak hours between 10am and 2pm to avoid overheating and dehydration.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear loose fitting clothing, preferably with a wicking material to keep you comfortable.

So give the treadmill or cross trainer a rest while the weather's good, grab your trainers, get outside in the fresh air and enjoy the area you live in to the full.

Hilary can be contacted on 07812 097562, email: hilarywestall@googlemail.com or visit www.hilarypersonaltrainer.co.uk



COMPETITION

Win a FREE one-to-one workout. See page 50