



fitness

## Ways to Beat the Heat and Still Stay Fit

J.J. KUNKLE

**Y**ou've been waiting all winter to get outside—enjoy the sun and warmth. And now, well, you've got it—plenty of heat! The mere thought of spending the day outside in the D.C. humidity exhausts you. The urge is to turn on the air conditioning, pick up the remote, a pint of ice cream, and relax.

Despite the urge to chill, there are ways to beat the heat and stay fit all summer long. The most obvious would be to get your cardio (biking, running, roller-blading, etc.) in during the morning or evening hours when heat is not at its peak. Save those prime hours for water sports. Swimming is a fantastic cardio-vascular workout! Just don't forget your sunscreen.

Other "cool" options are renting a kayak or canoe for a day. There are a few kayak rental places right in Old Town. A hike in the woods will be cooler than a walk in town on the concrete (especially if there's a nice stream to soak your feet in). And while biking can still be a chore on a hot day, you get a nice breeze!

To all the runners out there: if you're anything like me, you've been waiting months to get off the treadmill and back outside. Now the heat is forcing you back to the machine. If you long for the outdoor run, your best bet, of course, is to run early in the morning or in the evening once the sun has gone down. However, if the only chance you have to catch a run is your lunch hour, you can acclimate yourself to the heat. I still don't suggest heading out for a hard-

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### HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

#### HEAT CRAMPS

Heat cramps are caused by muscle contractions in both the calf or hamstring area. It feels like a severe muscle pull. The cramps are caused by dehydration, high temperatures and lack of physical conditioning. While heat cramps are painful, they are not life threatening. However, ignoring heat cramps can lead to some of the more serious heat related illnesses. Heat cramps can be treated with water, cool air and rest.

#### HEAT EXHAUSTION

Much like it sounds, heat exhaustion is severe exhaustion caused by extreme body heat. Excessive heat and dehydration can cause the body to overreact—raising your body well over 98.6. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include extreme fatigue, paleness, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, vomiting, fainting and cool, clammy skin. Heat exhaustion is more serious than the heat cramps and should be

addressed immediately. Cool, shady environments, liquids, cool compresses placed on the body and sports drinks are used to treat heat exhaustion. If the body temperature remains elevated after treatment, you should seek medical treatment.

#### HEAT STROKE

Heat Stroke is the most severe of the heat-related illnesses, and needs immediate medical attention! High temperatures, lack of body fluids and overexposure to the elements can all bring about Heat Stroke. Children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the hazards of this heat related illness. The first symptom of heat stroke is red, flushed skin. With heat stroke, a person doesn't sweat, so medical attention is needed to bring down their body temperature (which can get extremely high). Other symptoms include: seizures, headache, rapid pulse, and unconsciousness.

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day. But by gradually building up resistance to the heat (and staying hydrated), your body can become somewhat acclimated.

Start out slow and short—ten minutes of running at a slower than normal pace. The next day add another five minutes. After eight or nine days your body should have adjusted enough to tolerate the heat at your normal pace.

No matter what the activity, hydration is key during these hot summer months—not just during activity, but also on a daily basis. And if you are outside building up a sweat, you will want a sports drink to replace all the electrolytes you're losing.

Light clothing that wicks away moisture is another key to staying cool, along with keeping equipment to a minimum. If

you have asthma, skip the runs on bad ozone days and retreat to the air conditioned gym. And always carry your inhaler during outdoor exercise.

When the heat really starts to get you down, just think back to cold, dreary February—when all you could think were the golden days of summer! So blow-up those water wings and head out to the pool!

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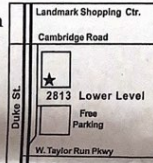
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