

SUMMER WELLNESS

AH, GO TAKE A HIKE!

There is no better time of year to get outside and immerse yourself in the natural beauty that surrounds us. Clear summer skies and more daylight hours can mean a great day on the trails. Canada has some of the most inspiring landscapes in the world. Make a point to check out the national parks in your area. For more information on our national parks, please go to <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/index>.

Whether you decide to explore a national or provincial park, a local conservation area, or the neighborhood ravine, some planning and preparation will help to make your hike an exciting and enjoyable experience.



Know Before You Go!

- 1** Hiking challenges your endurance and muscle strength. Get in shape for your hike! Get your body moving in a similar way and find ways to walk more during your day. You may want to park farther from the office or grocery store and walk part way, carry a backpack to the grocery store, or begin with a nightly walk around the neighbourhood.
- 2** Choose a hike that matches your experience and physical fitness level. When first starting out, choose a shorter, less steep trail, and progress over time.
- 3** Check the weather. Motivation will be low in the cold and rain, but the risk of an accident or fall will be high. Check the weather forecast online and choose a dry and seasonal summer day with a bit of cloud cover for the best experience. Otherwise, take a literal rain check.
- 4** Assess your footwear and clothing. If you plan on going for a 2-hour hike in a pair of flip flops, you're going to make the wrong kind of memories. You will need a solid cross trainer or hiking shoe if you are serious about more than a leisurely stroll. Remember to break in your footwear to avoid blisters and uncomfortable feet. Dress lightly and in layers, in breathable moisture-wicking fabrics, and don't forget your socks!
- 5** Remember to fill a water bottle, and pack some protein-based snacks (trail mix, granola bars, protein bars), sunscreen, and band aids. If you're not on a marked trail bring a compass as well - and know how to use it!

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Hiking Benefits the Body, Mind, and Spirit



Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease
Improves blood pressure and blood sugar
Strengthen muscles and bones
Reduces weight



Sharpens concentration
Builds the mapping area of the brain which decreases risk of Alzheimers
Reduces stress, anxiety, and depression



Connection to nature
Grounding and balancing activity
Increases happy hormones
Peace and a sense of well-being

Go Take a Hike!

While we don't have the mountains of BC, Ontario can boast about the Niagara Escarpment, the wetlands of Point Pelee, beautiful boardwalks, and the Canadian Shield. Whether it's a few hours, a day trip, or a hiking vacation, Ontario has something for everyone. Here are a few top picks for hiking adventures from Explore Magazine.

La Cloche Silhouette Trail

Killarny

ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/la-cloche-silhouette-trail

Cup and Saucer Trail

Manitoulin Island

ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/cup-saucer-trail

Bruce Trail

Toronto Section

ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/bruce-trail

The Rideau Trail

Kingston to Ottawa

ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/rideau-trail



Avon Trail

St. Mary's

ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/avon-trail

Nature, as it turns out, is a powerful, accessible and cost-effective tool to help us live our best lives. Getting away from people and out in nature may be exactly what you need to feel happy and healthy. So, the next time someone tells you to "Go take a hike," you may want to listen!

Sources: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/free-admission-parks-canada-1.4455797>
<https://greatist.com/fitness/know-before-you-go-hiking> | <https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/hiking-body-mind>
<https://www.shape.com/fitness/cardio/how-hiking-can-help-depression> | <https://www.explore-mag.com/Ontarios-25-Best-Hikes>