

8 Fun Ways to Stay Fit This Fall

Autumn is a great time to get fit. Outdoor activities like hiking, biking, and apple picking can keep you moving and having fun all season long.



During fall, the long, hot, lazy days of summer become a faded memory. The leaves turn autumnal shades of red, yellow, and orange, and the air gets a little crisper. In addition to the [beauty of the season](#), fall is a wonderful time to enjoy outdoor activities.

Autumn weather is just right for being active, says **Franci Cohen, a certified nutritionist, personal trainer, and exercise physiologist in Brooklyn, N.Y.** The temperature extremes of summer and [winter](#) can make it tough to exercise outdoors if you're not adequately prepared. But "in the fall, the weather outdoors is cool and temperate, and is extremely welcoming," **Cohen says.**

Fun Outdoor Activities for Fall Fitness

To reap the [health benefits of exercise](#), adults need at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week, and muscle-strengthening workouts on two or more days a week, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. So why not work some fall activities into your workouts? Step out of the box and try these fun ways to stay fit this autumn:

- **Pick your own apples.** Apple picking uses many muscle groups, says **Cohen**. "Whether you are climbing on a ladder or on the actual tree, if you move at a steady pace, apple picking is not only a fun family affair, but a fit one as well."
- **Climb a rock.** "Fall is a great time to learn a new outdoor sport — from rock climbing to cross-country running," says Scott Weiss, DPT, athletic trainer and physical therapist at Bodhizone wellness and physical therapy center in New York City. "Climbing the crag or running trails not only burns calories and is an efficient exercise, but brings us closer to nature," he adds.
- **Get in the game.** "Joining a fall sports league will help you burn calories, improve your fitness level, spark new friendships, and help you to see and feel the benefits of an active

lifestyle,” says **Cohen**. Give soccer or even flag football a try, but before starting fall activities, get the green light from your doctor.

- **Hit the beach.** Just because Labor Day has come and gone doesn't mean you can't plan a beach day. “Beaches are empty in the fall, making them great places to exercise,” says Weiss. Try walking or jogging on the beach. Medicine ball throws and track and field drills are also good to do on the beach. If the water is still warm where you live, surfing, kite boarding, paddle boarding, and sea kayaking are all fun, but, “be sure to bring a friend, as lifeguards are not on duty,” he suggests.
- **Conquer a corn maze.** Chasing your kids around a corn maze can get your heart pumping and even mimic interval training, says **Cohen**. “Run vigorously until you hit a dead end, then stop. Repeat and repeat. This can help improve your cardiovascular endurance and increase lung capacity,” she adds.
- **Clean up the yard.** When those colorful autumn leaves fall to the ground, they can make a mess of your yard. Gather your family together and start raking. Let the smallest members of your cleanup crew jump in a few leaf piles. When the fun is done, know that raking and bagging leaves can burn 200 to 300 calories an hour, making it a great option for fall fitness, says Weiss.
- **Hop on your bike.** Work a bike ride into your fall fitness plan. “Biking builds strength, muscle tone, stamina, and cardio-respiratory endurance, and can be very enjoyable when the weather permits,” says **Cohen**.
- **Take a hike.** Hiking outdoors is not only a fun fall activity, but it also does a body good. “Hiking uphill, even at a gradual incline, works the quads, hamstrings, adductors (inner thigh muscles), and abductors (outer thigh muscles), and also strengthens your lower back and core,” **Cohen** says.

Outdoor activities and exercise can also boost your mood. People who exercise outdoors have lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and higher levels of vitamin D — the sunshine vitamin, says Weiss.

That being said, “the crisp outdoor air is great for most, but cold, dry air is not good for everyone. People with asthma should beware and prepare, as cooler temperatures can trigger symptoms,” says Weiss. If you're concerned about exercising outdoors in the fall, get approval from your doctor before you get out and enjoy these fun fall activities.