



## Summer Edition



### GET MOVING!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE

by Patricia Azarkam,

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Staying active can help with our physical health, but did you also know about the positive effects exercise may have on dealing with our mood, emotions, sleep, stress, and brain function? Regular exercise can help us to enhance our sense of well-being, feel good about ourselves, and increase our energy levels.

Physical activity can also strengthen our capacity to develop healthy coping and resiliency skills. Here are some tips to consider for you and your family this summer:

**1** Find an activity you enjoy. Start with something small and simple. Use whatever is available, affordable and enjoyable to you. Involve the whole family.

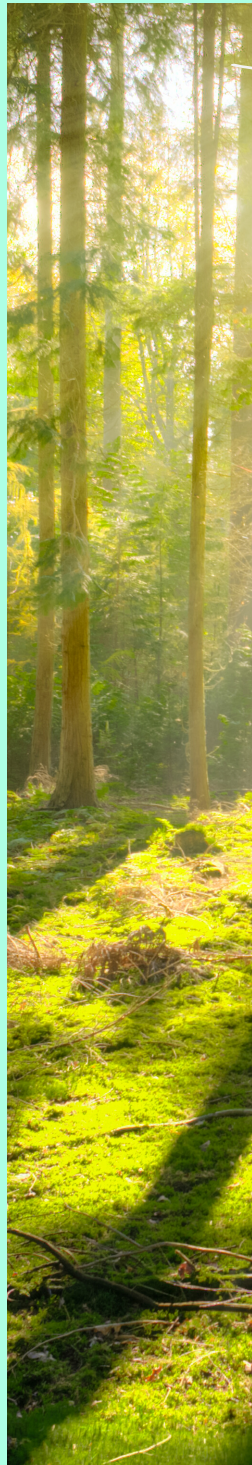
**2** Plan a daily time to exercise, even if it is brief. Focus on your body sensations as you move. Do more of what feels good!

**3** Be gentle with yourself. Make it fun! Listen to your favourite music!

**4** Consider the following activities:

Dancing, jogging, walking, running up and down the stairs, neck rolls, jumping jacks, arm circles, workout apps or virtual exercise classes, yoga, stretching, deep breathing, nature walks and hikes, riding a bike, jumping rope, rollerblading!

Keep busy, have fun, and stay safe this summer!



## EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS

by Jennifer Kapler, M.A., C.Psych.

Have you ever wondered what happens to our brains in the summertime? Recent research suggests that summer months are actually the best for the brain's productivity. Longer days and more natural light increase the mind's ability to focus and retain information. Additionally, increased outdoor time and fresh air is good for mental health.

Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature or listening to nature sounds have beneficial effects. Studies have shown that experiencing nature in many forms can reduce anger, fear, stress, depression, anxiety, and increase pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, it contributes to your physical wellbeing – reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

Even in a large city, you don't have to go far to experience these benefits. A walk in the park, in your neighborhood/local garden, or even looking at your houseplants and listening to nature sounds can all have similar effects on our well-being.

Challenge yourself and your family to get outdoors and embrace all the beneficial effects of nature this summer! Check out our resource section on the next page for a link to an article that further explores the benefits of nature on our well-being.





# THE LEARNING SPACE

## Fun Ways to Enhance Math Skills over the Summer

by Jill Shuster, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Math can be found in so many places! Summer is the perfect time to make connections between math concepts taught in school and every day experiences. Research demonstrates that during a typical summer, students forget some of their math skills. Parents and caregivers can have a positive impact by reviewing, reinforcing and generalizing previously learned concepts. Below are some simple math activities that you can do with your children over the summer:

### For early learners

- **Count** (squirrels, seeds in watermelon, flowers, petals, cars). Use groups of objects to count by 2's, 5's, or 10's.
- **Compare** (Are there more black cars than white cars or robins than cardinals?)
  - Identify shapes in everyday surroundings. ("Look at that house. What shape is the door? What shape is the roof?")
  - Look for **patterns** or make your own out of leaves, shells, rocks, etc.
  - Use a **calendar** to keep track of schedules, days, and upcoming events. Ask your child to identify how many days there are until a particular event.
  - Use a **clock** to plan a daily schedule.



What times are meals and planned activities?

### For more advanced learners

- Look for **math in nature**. Calculate daily rainfall using a weather app or a measuring cup and track weekly totals. You can also calculate average weekly temperatures.
- Get your child involved in **buying groceries**. They can help make a grocery list and sort items into categories or begin to use a budget and fit items into that budget.
- Travel may be minimal due to Covid19, but perhaps you can **plan a road trip for the future**. Use a map (or Google Maps) and use time and distances to make an itinerary.
- **Use a recipe** and utilize fractions to adjust portions as needed. Double or half the recipe to practice addition, multiplication and division.
- **Make a plan** to build a fort, robot, decorate a room, etc. Take measurements and plot them on the plan.

For learners of all ages, games with cards and dice provide opportunities to learn about quantities, probabilities, and strategy. Look for games that offer the right amount of challenge as they can be a fun way for children to review skills and feel a sense of mastery and enjoyment. See the resource section below for a link to more fun ideas on how to incorporate math throughout the summer. Make math fun and a part of your life!

By Afshan Siddiqui, Ph.D., C.Psych.

**Question: My daughter's graduation was supposed to be this month and she's really disappointed that it's not happening. How can I help?**

It's understandable that your daughter is disappointed about not being able to celebrate this milestone. Celebrations are times we can connect with others and feel important or proud of the goals we've accomplished. Unfortunately, the rules that are keeping us safe right now are also making it hard to celebrate our special moments. Over the last few months, people have been very creative in recognizing others by:

- **hosting virtual parties**
- **having drive-by "parades"**
- **writing chalk messages**
- **making mementos (e.g., scrapbook, slide show, video, notes)**
- **rescheduling events to when things are safer**

Talk to your daughter and see what she'd like to do. Whatever you decide, she (and you!) might still feel grief or loss for "what could have been." You can help by:

- **letting her share her feelings**
- **telling her that her feelings are normal and it's okay to feel them**
- **encouraging her to focus on what she's happy about right now**

With time, these upset feelings should lessen. If, over time, she's having trouble letting go and is struggling to cope with difficult feelings, consulting with outside services may be helpful. See the resources section for a link to the What's Up Walk-In clinic.

**From our kindergarten to high school graduates, we recognize your hard work throughout the year!**



## RESOURCES

[THE HEALING POWER OF NATURE](#)

[HOW GAMES HELP KIDS WITH MATH](#)

[WHAT'S UP WALK-IN CLINIC](#)

[RAISING CONFIDENT KIDS](#)

[SUMMER WELLNESS GUIDE FROM TDSB MHWB TEAM](#)

[TIPS & TRICKS FOR HELPING STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL](#)

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This month we're celebrating a few important events. To learn more, click [here](#).