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By Michael Stefano

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SUMMERTIME FITNESS

Exercise On The Go

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Whether you're a seasoned athlete who's been training all your life, or just getting started on a new exercise program, finding time to workout when the warm weather hits can become a rather daunting challenge.

From ballgames to backyard barbecues, the warm weather brings many activities that can lead to more eating and less exercise. Life is not a dress rehearsal, and for most of us, giving up a day of picnicking on the beach or a sunny morning on the golf course for the dank artificial cool of the local health club, presents no real choice.

So go ahead, bring the kids to the park, spend the weekend at the shore, do whatever it is your heart desires while the sun sits high in the sky. Exercise and summer fun can go hand and hand –achieving a sort-of two bird with one stone effect. And by following a few simple suggestions, you can turn your day at the shore into fun and fitness.

Walk It Off

Instead of just lying on the beach all day, take a walk along

the shoreline. The extra effort that it takes to walk briskly on the soft, sandy surface will contribute to the overall fat burning effect.

While vacationing at your favorite summer getaway, steer clear of cars and cabs, and walk wherever and whenever possible. On a recent trip to Las Vegas, I logged in an average of 6 miles every day (as measured by a pedometer) simply by walking to and from various hotels, restaurants and casinos all day. Undoubtedly, this helped balance out the all-you-can-eat buffet food.

Play Don't Lay

Get off that beach blanket and join in the fun –play some volleyball, toss around a frisbee, go for a swim, or bodysurf. Just don't lie there for 4 hours roasting in the sun. If picnicking with friends or family members, organize or join in a softball game, play horseshoes, or take a hike in the woods. Get in the middle of whatever happens to be going on.

When vacationing at your favorite all-inclusive Caribbean Island, you'll be offered to participate in an endless stream of events from an afternoon match of water polo to singing and dancing in a combination employee/guest Broadway like stage production. Don't pass the chance to make calorie burning this much fun.

Travel Light

Bodyweight alone can provide all or most of the resistance you'll need to improve both strength and endurance, while at the same time burning fat and toning up the entire body. The addition of some very lightweight, inexpensive items can provide you with a level of variety, safety, and an overall more effective approach.

Resistance bands, or tubing have been popular with physical therapist for years, as they offer a safe and effective way to challenge muscles when recovering from injury, without placing undue strain on surrounding joints. Lengths of tubing that come in various resistance levels, weigh almost nothing, take up virtually no space in the most over-packed suitcase. When combined with a simple door anchor, bands make available a wide variety of exercise options. They're also a great substitute for stationary and more expensive forms of resistance equipment.

An exercise mat is a must-have. Put it between yourself and any hotel room floor. Inexpensive mats tri-fold, and fit nicely folded into a traveling bag. It can be used to do push ups on a sandy surface, or sit ups on an unpadded floor. A good mat provides solid traction and footing for many simple floor type exercises.

A summer day spent walking around any big city is a plethora of sights, sounds and beautiful experiences. Living right outside Manhattan, Kim (a very special lady and my co-editor) and I, put on a good pair of walking shoes and take the Long Island railroad into Penn Station without having a specific destination. We feel like we're on vacation as we comb the town on foot, having a great time, burning lots of calories with every step.

So go ahead and enjoy yourself. The amount of stress relief you'll gain from enjoying life will be well worth a few missed workouts. In the process, you can continue to exercise your body in a possibly, much needed, new fashion. You'll be surprised at how a few simple adjustments and keep you fit all summer long.

About the Author

Michael Stefano: Author of The Firefighter's Workout Book, Not Just For Firefighters! Special Offer: Lose weight and get in the shape of your life with the FREE Train For Life Newsletter, as well as customized workouts for both men and women.

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