

Thrive



JULY

SUMMER

ADVENTURE





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**Do you feel like you are in a rut?
Looking for something different?**

It is true that routine is comfortable, but it is good to change your routine and enjoy some adventure in your life. With the stresses of work, kids' school activities, plus planning for their college, it is necessary to take time to breathe. Look for something different that could add excitement and enhance your health and well-being. If you're looking for summertime adventure, then keep reading.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES PRESCRIBED FOR GOOD HEALTH

Of course outdoor activities enhance your health and overall well-being, but in some cases it is prescribed as treatment. Park RX America, a non-profit organization, was created to work with health care professionals to prescribe parks to their patients as part of their clinical practice. Founder and medical director Dr. Robert Zarr noted that spending time in natural environments increases physical activity and decreases the risk of development of chronic disease. A Harvard University health newsletter had this to say about the benefits of the outdoors:

- **Vitamin D levels will go up with just 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure, without sunscreen.**
 - o Studies suggest it may have protective effects against everything from osteoporosis to cancer, depression, heart attacks and stroke.
- **Adults, and especially children, will get more exercise since being outdoors is usually associated with physical activity. Being indoors is associated with more sedentary activity, such as playing video games, using electronic devices and watching television.**
- **Greater happiness, especially with “green” exercise.**
 - o Physical activity can elevate mood.
 - o Some research suggests that exercising in the presence of nature can also improve self-esteem and mood.
- **Improved concentration.**
 - o Researchers report that children with ADHD seem to focus better after walking through a park than in a residential neighborhood. As a suggestion, adults who have trouble concentrating should try taking a walk in a park.
- **Faster healing.**
 - o University of Pittsburgh researchers report that patients who were exposed to natural light and had window views of trees experienced less pain and stress as well as took fewer pain medications during their recoveries.



LOOK WHAT OKLAHOMA HAS TO OFFER

For a vacation or a whole summer of adventure, look no further than Oklahoma. State parks in Oklahoma offer a variety of activities for children and adults that give you a chance to explore, learn and have fun.

For the OKC metro area, visit the Oklahoma City Community Foundation website for information on their community resource project, [Get Moving OKC](#), which has many outdoor activities you can join. These activities are broken down by where to go in the different areas of the metro.

WALKING | RUNNING | BIKING | HIKING | WATER SPORTS

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department's website has so many activities available statewide, from festivals and events to hiking trails and more. Here are just two examples of what Oklahoma has to offer:

- **Passport: My Oklahoma State Park Adventures**

- o Partnership involving the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, Oklahoma State Department of Health, and State Department of Education.
- o Program goals:
 - Promote the use and enjoyment of Oklahoma's 33 state parks.
 - Encourage travel throughout our state.
 - Educate our citizens on Oklahoma's amazing natural beauty and promote state pride.
 - Foster improved wellness through physical activity, proper diet and by being tobacco free.
- o Passport booklet, available at any state park office, provides challenges and adventures. Children can collect stickers from each park and six state park tokens. Each park has a fitness challenge listed in the booklet, and children can earn three **It's Fun to Get Fit** medallions in bronze, silver and gold.

- **Heart Healthy Trails in Oklahoma**

- o Paved trail or nature/hiking trail; easy to moderate difficulty; marked by Heart Healthy Trail signs. [List of parks with Heart Healthy Trails.](#)

- **Check out the OK State Parks Official Guide App on your phone for more information.**

Visit the [Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department website](#) for a complete list of all the experiences and things to do in Oklahoma. Remember, no matter what you do, be sure to be safe.