



*A choice you can feel at home with<sup>SM</sup>*

## Hello and Happy Spring from the Coventry Service Program!

Here at the Coventry Service Program office, we're ready for spring! Because we live in a cold and snowy climate, by this time each year we're all ready for temperatures that allow us to get outside for long periods of time. Sharing a bit about why getting outside means so much to us seems like an appropriate topic. There are benefits for everyone no matter what age or location. Have you planned how to spend time outdoors this spring? As always, let us know if we can support you in any of your health or wellness goals. We welcome your call or email.

### Why is getting outside important?

There is no denying it; getting outside and spending time in nature is a good thing. Studies show that spending time outdoors can **lower blood pressure**, boost **mental health**, help us to **feel happier**, increase our **creativity**, **improve sleep**, **improve memory**, improve **academic performance**, and **boost our immune systems**. Even those of us who live in cities can benefit by spending time in urban green spaces. *Just five minutes around trees or in green spaces can improve health.*



### Do I need to be a hiker?

There are plenty of people who enjoy getting out and going for a long hike up a mountain or along a trail. For example, read about **these folks** who travel the world and take "long distance walks." But, that's not the only way you can benefit from being outside. Simply getting out and being present in nature can lead to many of the benefits mentioned above. **Gardening**, sitting on a **park bench in a green space**, **camping**, **swimming**, **volunteering**, and playing with children are all ways that we may enjoy the outdoors without intensive exercise.



If you *are* looking to expand your exercise routine, know that **research** suggests that exercising outside can lead to greater feelings of revitalization and increased energy, while decreasing tension, anger, and depression.

## A note from our Wellness Specialist, Mary, about being out in the heat:

There are things to think about before you spend time outside, exercising or otherwise. Consider the importance of staying **hydrated**, having sun protection, staying alert, **letting others know where you're going**, carrying your cell phone if you can, watching the weather and **paying attention to advisories**, becoming familiar with **ticks** and other **pests**, and knowing any **red flags** to watch out for. Ask questions of your doctor or other qualified clinician before you venture out.

Summer months can be the best time of year for outdoor activities, but be aware of possible brutal conditions



especially if you live in the Mid-west or Southern states. In the early part of the summer the temperatures can be almost perfect. Then as summer creeps in, the humidity combined with high temperatures can make you run back in to the air conditioning quickly. Along with the heat you find the bugs have made their arrival with a vengeance. Weather is becoming less predictable so check daily forecasts.

Tips that I have found helpful as someone who is familiar with hot weather:

- Be outside in the early morning or evening when it's coolest.
- Pace yourself even if you think it's cool enough, because the humidity can often be deceiving!
- Carry water with you and hydrate throughout the day.
- Find a hat that will block the sun.
- Keep yourself safe from mosquitos or other bugs, with a spray or natural alternative.
- Look for a shaded spot to offer a break from the sun.
- Make a plan! Be Prepared! Get Outside!

Please email Mary Jameson directly if you would like to learn more about how she stays safe during her outdoor adventures. She can be reached at [Mjameson@coventrycarelink.com](mailto:Mjameson@coventrycarelink.com).

## To share with you:



While its not totally unusual in Maine for snow to fall in April, that doesn't change the fact that many of us don't welcome it. Here is a photo of the snow falling during a storm earlier this month. Bring on spring! Please share your seasonal photos with us. Maybe they will be shared in our next newsletter!

Wishing you well,

*Diane, Erin, Jacki, Jane, Linda, & Mary*

## Resources for you:

We have found the following resources to be helpful in the development of this newsletter. Please click on the underlined link to access the webpage.

**New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Business Insider, HuffPost Life, Next Avenue, Harvard, Greater Good Magazine, National Institute on Aging**

We await your feedback! Tell us how about your best outdoor experience.

## Stay Connected!

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You are encouraged to make use of these staff ideas to enhance your lifestyle, however, no content presented here should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician.

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