

fresh air fitness

Not a gym person? No problem. There are plenty of other fun, fitness-boosting options. **Martha Lourey-Bird** looks at five cheap and easy ways to get a no-walls workout.

Sick of being cooped up indoors? You're not alone. Get outside, breathe some fresh air and bask in the sunshine – it will do wonders for your mind and body. Exercising outdoors is as good, if not better, for you than working out inside.

There are plenty of opportunities to improve your fitness and with a range of activities on offer, you'll never get bored. No matter what workout you're doing, aim for at least a moderate intensity, and find out if you're on the mark by doing the 'talk test', where you can talk, but can't sing.

Cycling

Sick of walking, but not really ready to start running? Cycling is the ideal transition for a higher intensity workout since it's a low-impact exercise and extremely accessible. There are plenty of bike paths around and provided you challenge yourself and increase resistance by changing gears and riding up hills, you'll get an excellent workout.

Golf

Golf is a low-intensity exercise that can keep you active and out in the fresh air. A round of golf can take all morning to complete, and to create an even bigger health boost, walk everywhere instead of hiring a buggy. In addition to a cardio workout, pushing your golf bag around for a few hours can help improve your muscle tone too. If you haven't played golf before, take a lesson first to ensure you've mastered the basics of the game.

Bushwalking

Australia and New Zealand are known for their bushland, and we're lucky to have access with marked hiking tracks. While it's nice to just get outside in beautiful scenery and stroll, if your goal is improved fitness, choose tracks that are challenging with plenty of hills. Wear sturdy footwear with a grippy sole and ankle support. Remember to take plenty of water, stick to the marked path, wear high protection sunscreen and walk with a friend.

Ocean swimming

Doing laps in an ocean pool is actually far harder than doing them in an indoor pool because you've got the added resistance of natural currents and waves.

Swimming is a non-impact complete body exercise. Even better? Swimming in the salt water instead of heavily chlorinated pools is much better for your skin. Do the 'talk test' to check your intensity after a couple of laps.

Basketball or netball

Playing a game of basketball uses all your muscles. It's a combination of both aerobic (long, consistent cardio exercise) and anaerobic (short, sharp bursts of high-intensity exercise). It's similar to interval training, but in a team environment. Consider joining a team in a local competition, or you could regularly round up a group of friends for a game. If there's only a few of you, you can play a half-court game and still get a good workout. **www**



Photo: Austral Press