

MOVE LIKE A KID AGAIN

Contributed by Heidi Roth, RDN, CHHC

It seems like life is changing and moving faster than ever. Phones, AI, endless social media distractions and notifications – it can feel hard to keep up with. Interestingly, it's not just older people feeling this way. A recent Harris Poll found that a full 60% of Gen Z adults said they wish they could return to a time before everyone was “plugged in.”

All ages seem to be feeling nostalgic now, and you can see it play out on social media, which is a little ironic. Reddit, TikTok, and Instagram are full of threads where people describe the childhood summers they remember: riding bikes around the neighborhood, running through sprinklers, catching fireflies, and playing outside until the streetlights came on.

There is actually good research behind why these memories feel so powerful. Nostalgia is not just “living in the past.” Studies suggest that nostalgic memories can increase feelings of connection, meaning, optimism, and well-being.

For many of us, childhood summers weren't packed with elaborate plans, but were built around small, ordinary moments. We made up games, built forts, played with sidewalk chalk, and wandered around the neighborhood.

One underrated part of those summers? Boredom. Too hot to do much, all your friends on vacation, nothing good on TV... believe it or not, this may have been really good for us! Numerous studies show that boredom serves as an emotional reset, drives creativity, possibly prevents depression, and prompts the brain to problem-solve. We've lost that feeling now as it's possible to be entertained every second of the day. This summer, think about putting the phone away for a while, and enjoy the lazy, slow pace of summer.

Not sure what a lazy, slow pace would even look like after years of go, go, go? Think back to childhood when your time seemed limitless. How did you spend your time? Many people feel that revisiting childhood hobbies allows them to connect with their core identity and interests while freeing themselves of the pressures of perfectionism. Or, put simply – it's fun!

Get Outside

One of the easiest ways to reconnect with old-fashioned summer fun is simply to get outside. The benefits of being outside in nature are well documented. A 2019 study found that spending at least two hours a week in nature was significantly linked to better health and psychological well-being. Combine that with some movement, and it's almost guaranteed to boost your well-being. We all have different likes, but there's a good chance that if you enjoyed it as a kid, you'll enjoy it as a grown-up!

Ride Your Bike

Biking is typically one of the first things people think about from their childhood summers. If it's been a while, give it a try again. So many communities have bike trails now, including rail-trail paths that are relatively flat, scenic, and away from traffic. You might be surprised how many there are near you! TrailLink.com is a great resource for finding one. Rent a bike, borrow one, or dust yours off. You might rediscover a favorite pastime.

Dive In!

Swimming is always a fun way to cool off, whether it's a public pool, pond, lake or local swimming hole. Remember Slip 'N Slides?! Have a water gun or water balloon fight with your kids, run through the sprinkler, rent a kayak or paddleboard, or build a sandcastle at the beach even if kids aren't involved!





Roll with It!

Rollerblading and rollerskating are making a deserved comeback. Aside from being fun, skating is a low-impact, full-body aerobic workout. This means you'll boost your cardiovascular system, burn calories, strengthen your core, and release feel-good endorphins with minimal stress on joints. Even if it's been a while, there's a reason they say "it's like riding a bike" – you just get right back into it. Don't forget the wrist-guards, knee pads, and helmet.

Game On!

If your neighborhood was anything like mine, houses with basketball hoops, badminton nets, or yards big enough for tag were hotspots during the summer. We spent hours playing! While you might have a hard time convincing a group of friends to play tag these days, lowkey lawn games are a great way to sneak in a little movement without it feeling like exercise. Play with the kids, throw a frisbee, shoot hoops, play volleyball, badminton, bocce, croquet, or cornhole– anything that gets you up and moving!

Hit the Playground!

If you haven't been to a playground in a while, you're missing out on a great workout! Swing on the monkey bars to build upper-body and grip strength, use benches for step-ups, tricep dips, and incline push-ups, and use swings for rows. With a little creativity, you can have a full-body workout that's fun and free.

None of these ideas require expensive equipment, perfect weather, or hours of free time. They simply ask us to step away from our screens, move our bodies, and reconnect with the activities that once brought us joy. This summer, make time for a little old-fashioned fun. It may be one of the simplest and most effective ways to support your physical health, boost your mood, and create a few new memories worth feeling nostalgic about someday.

BERRIES & CREAM POPSICLES

There's nothing like a popsicle on a hot day! Here's a healthy recipe for the classic summer treat.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup fresh berries (blueberries, strawberries, or blackberries)
- 2-3 TB honey or agave
- ¼ cup water
- 1 TB fresh lime juice
- 2 cups vanilla Greek yogurt (I like full fat but low-fat works as well)

PREPARATION:

1. In a blender, purée the berries, honey, ¼ cup water, and lime juice until smooth. Taste for sweetness and add a little more honey if desired.
2. Pour mixture into a bowl and gently stir in the yogurt, but don't fully blend it. You want to leave some patches and swirls of both the yogurt and berry mixture.
3. Divide the mixture among 6 ice pop molds and insert sticks. Freeze until solid.

What nostalgic summer activity gets you moving?



Heidi Roth, RD, LDN is a Registered/Licensed Dietitian, Health Coach and nutrition expert with a passion for health and wellness. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics.

