

By *Cassandra Bachrach*

So you're ready to make some lifestyle changes to get fit and stay fit. Perhaps you've already stocked your refrigerator with fresh fruits and veggies, lean protein and healthy oils and spices. And maybe you've added five minutes of meditative deep breathing to your morning routine to set the tone for a relaxed day ahead.

At last, you're ready to launch a cardio and resistance training program at your local gym. But wait! When you checked the membership fee, your heart did a major flip-flop. At \$600 per year, it's more than your budget can spare. Furthermore, the gym is 16 miles from your house and that adds fuel costs and steals precious time from your evening. Think you're out of luck? Think again....

Getting and staying fit need not involve expensive gym memberships or high-dollar home training equipment. In fact, many exercise "machines" end up as clothing racks rather than being utilized. The following 20 fitness activities require neither gyms nor thousands of dollars worth of equipment. At most, you'll need only a few simple items and beautiful Mother Nature.

1. A brisk 30-minute walk in your neighborhood
2. A brisk 30-minute walk at the mall or in your office building
3. Running or jogging
4. Stair-climbing at a stadium or in your high-rise office building
5. Bicycling
6. Hiking at a state park
7. Stretching
8. Pilates
9. Jumping rope
10. Free weights
11. Resistance bands
12. Bodyweights a.k.a. "isometrics" or "calisthenics": abdominal crunches, push-ups, pull ups, etc.
13. Exercise DVDs like P90X, Insanity, Chalean, Rev-Abs, and more
14. Frisbee golf
15. Fit Trail Parcourse at a local park
16. Ballroom dancing
17. Gardening, shoveling, raking leaves
18. Splitting wood
19. Swimming at the lake or at someone's private "free" swimming pool
20. Walking the dog

WEB RESOURCES:

1. <http://www.guppyweightloss.com/you-don't-need-a-gym-membership-to-exercise>
2. <http://remotecontrol.mtv.com/2011/01/28/i-used-to-be-fat-home-workout-products/>
3. <http://fitonawhim.squarespace.com/my-blog/you-dont-need-an-expensive-gym-membership-to-get-great-resul.html>
4. <http://www.sharecare.com/question/getting-fit-without-gym-membership>
5. <http://www.fitinahurry.com/blog/2009/04/16/4-reasons-you-dont-need-the-gym/>
6. <http://www.errickthetrainer.com/2011/04/19/you-dont-need-a-gym-membership/>