HOW TO GET READY FOR SUMMER (and Learn to Love Yourself in the Process)

Get ready — it’s coming.

The days are getting longer and the temperature is rising. This means you’ll soon see articles about how to get ready for summer. Usually with titles like 5 Ways to Get Summer-Body Ready or Get Bikini Ready Now.

The premise of these articles is that there’s something “wrong” with your body and you’d better change quickly if you’re going to walk around in something other than long pants and a jacket.

Your new summer challenge is to ignore these articles.

First, you shouldn’t eat well and exercise only in preparation for the summer. Healthy living is a year-round pursuit. Second, and more importantly, there’s nothing wrong with your body.

This year, as the weather gets warmer, try focusing on things that have [nothing to do with appearance](https://www.wholelifechallenge.com/your-body-is-not-your-masterpiece-your-health-is/) but that will help you have an adventurous, restful, and healthy summer. This focus will not only guarantee the quality of your summer — but the rest of your life, as well.

With that in mind, here are a few ways to prepare for your best summer yet.

**1. Plan a Trip**

A 2010 study found more happiness comes from planning a vacation than taking the actual trip. The study, out of the Netherlands, looked at the happiness of more than 1,500 Dutch adults and learned that anticipating a vacation improved happiness for eight weeks. That’s definitely longer than most vacations.

To get the most out of this effect, spend time thinking about your vacation ahead of time. If you’re someone who doesn’t enjoy the logistics of planning a trip, you can anticipate your trip by looking at photos or reading articles about your destination.

Think about what you’re looking forward to on the vacation. Is it the food, the relaxation time, or the adventure? Let yourself daydream about sleeping in, taking time off work, and getting a break from the routine. Remember this is as important as the actual trip and allow yourself the joy of anticipation.

**2. Learn a New Skill**

Warm summer days mean opportunities to golf, surf, kayak, or bike ride. But if you wait until the height of summer to take on a new skill, you might never get out there.

As you get ready for summer, think about which warm-weather activity you’ve always wanted to try, and start working on that skill. That might mean training at an indoor golf facility or swimming laps at a local pool. Start putting in the work now so you feel confident and ready to go when summer hits and you can [take advantage of the beautiful weather](https://www.wholelifechallenge.com/the-most-important-appointment-youre-missing-every-week/).

**3. Get Outside and Start Moving**

It’s natural to slow down a bit in the winter, especially if you live in a cold climate. The days are short and the nights are cold, so it makes sense to spend time bundled up at home. As the days get longer and warmer, you might have to work to break this habit. The television and couch will beckon, but make an effort to go for a post-dinner walk or get outside during the weekend.

Moving more will help you improve your fitness for outdoor summer activities and can also help you feel good about your body. When you get moving, be sure to pick something you love doing. The idea is not to punish your body with miserable hours on the treadmill, but to celebrate and enjoy what your body can do.

Enjoying movement and thinking positively about your body is a wonderful way to prepare for wearing shorts and bathing suits. The more you move your body, the better you feel, and the more confident you become. It’s a virtuous cycle and a great way to get ready for summer in a self-loving way.

**4. Eat with the Seasons**

One of the best things you can learn from joining a community supported agriculture (CSA), or farm share, is how to change up your fruit and vegetable consumption. With a CSA, you pay quarterly for a weekly delivery of locally-grown, organic fruits and vegetables. Therefore, the fruits and vegetables you receive each week reflect the seasons.

In the fall and winter you may receive things like butternut squash, potatoes, turnips, beets, and apples. When spring begins, you may start to receive strawberries and sugar snap peas, and in summer the peaches, apricots, eggplant, and zucchini appear.

Your cooking can change along with the vegetables. In winter, you can use the root vegetables to make hearty stews, and in summer, cook lighter meals on the grill. This helps you to not get bored with cooking and ensures you and your family eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. It may also make you feel connected to the seasons and help you prepare for a summer that’s focused on nourishment and abundance, rather than punishment and restriction.

[Seasonal Food Guide](https://www.seasonalfoodguide.org/) is a wonderful resource to find what’s in season in your area. And an excellent book on this subject is Barbara Kingsolver’s [Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01JYX7LKU/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1), about the author’s attempt to eat only locally grown, organic food for a year.

**How Will You Get Ready for Summer?**

As the weather gets warmer, don’t go on a crash diet or pick up an exercise routine you hate. Instead, focus on an upcoming vacation, get outside, and enjoy the increased variety of locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

And if you must read an article about a summer body, [make it this one](https://www.newyorker.com/humor/daily-shouts/how-to-get-your-body-ready-for-summer).

*A San Diego-based writer and editor with more than fifteen years' experience, Hilary Auchaer writes for San Diego Magazine, the CrossFit Journal, covers the CrossFit Games, and has written content for UCSD Health Services, the Rady School of Management, National University, the Moores Cancer Center, and Dr. Oz’s Transformation Nation.*