University of Richmond Employee Wellness

Easy Ways to Make Your Summer More Eco-Friendly

Whether it’s boating on a lake or lounging on the beach, hiking a National Park or diving into pools, summer is all about being in nature. But while summer is the time we’re outdoors the most, it’s also the time when our energy use and outdoor activities do the most harm to the environment. So in order to enjoy your summer while protecting Mother Nature, here are five quick-and-easy tips for greening your summer fun.

1. **Regulate your air conditioning.** According to the polling site Five Thirty Eight, America’s energy consumption balloons in the summer, reaching some 33 percent higher than in the spring or fall. And the number-one driver of this peak use is air conditioners. But thanks to modern technology, controlling your AC use is as easy as the touch of a button. With a programmable smart thermostat, you can set your air conditioner to turn off while you’re at work, at play, or on vacation, then turn on shortly before you arrive home. And with a desktop or mobile app, you can adjust your settings from wherever you are — and even earn reward points from your energy company.

2. **Make a pledge to stop using plastic party supplies.** There’s nothing like a good, old-fashioned summer barbecue. But while you can always count on at least one guest asking you to hold the relish, here’s something else it would be great to hold: plastic party supplies. Americans use some 40 billion (that’s right, billion) plastic utensils every year, most for five minutes or less. Add to that the 780,000 tons of plastic and Styrofoam cups we toss casually away and we’re talking some serious waste, especially since recycling is often more complicated than we think. An alternative is to stock up on an extra set of dishware and cutlery from a secondhand store; a little bit of extra washing, sure, but a big savings for the environment — and your wallet.

3. **Use reef-safe sunblock.** Protecting yourself from the harmful effects of the sun is important. Unfortunately, according to The New York Times, about 14,000 tons of sunscreen wind up in our oceans every year, with the most damage being done to fragile coral reefs in Hawaii and the Caribbean. Fortunately, there are a variety of alternatives on the market, called mineral or physical sunblocks, that do not contain the coral-bleaching chemicals oxybenzone and octinoxate. That’s good news for your skin — and even better news for the oceans.

4. **Practice catch-and-release fishing.** Simply put, catch-and-release is the practice of letting your fish go once you’ve caught it. When done correctly, with rods and reels that do not exhaust the fish together with the use of barbless hooks, survival rates can be as high as 90 percent or more. Like anything else, catch-and-release is a technique that must be learned, but you’ll be doing your part to protect native species without having to give up the fun of fishing.

5. **Organize a staycation.** Although the weather may be on your side, summer may in fact be one of the worst times to travel — as anyone who’s ever sat in a Sunday-night traffic jam to get back into the city can attest. And while we’d never advocate giving up the joys of travel, there’s also a great deal to be said for getting reacquainted with yourself, your home, and your local area. And with air travel making up 10 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions and long-distance car travel not far behind, staycations are amongst the single most environmentally friendly things you can do with your summer free time.

Going green doesn’t have to mean major lifestyle changes. Just committing to a few easy tweaks in your routine can do wonders for the environment — and your sense of pride.

Source: Student Conservation Association

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**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**USAC & UR Well Employee - Summer Bracket Challenge**

Summer Goodie Bag Giveaway: July 12-July 16

Staff Appreciation at the Demo Kitchen: July 13, 2pm, 2:15pm, 2:30pm & 2:45pm

Yoga for Resilience + Yoga Nidra in Mind-Body Studio: July 15, 2pm-3pm

Crystal Meditation and Goodie Bag Giveaway: July 21 at 2pm or 2:30pm

**Sit and Stretch w/Cigna**

July 13th and July 27th at 12pm and 4pm

**Cigna Coaching Overview**

July 13th at 1pm
Yo U R Compliance Connection with Kris Henderson, Director of Compliance and Title IX Coordinator

As we start July, I know you share my excitement of seeing everyone back on campus. It has been a very difficult 16 months and I am grateful we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am also grateful that no matter if we were working remotely or on campus, compliance continued to be an important part of all our work.

Three years ago, we launched the Compliance Training program. These trainings were designed to provide us with knowledge of critical laws, regulations and policies. They also provided a common language around these important issues. The initial launch included training on Harassment and Discrimination Prevention, Cybersecurity, and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

We promised that you would be asked to do the training on Harassment and Discrimination Prevention every three years. Cybersecurity threats change so quickly, we asked that you complete a training every year on that important topic. Finally, we asked that you complete FERPA training once and only if you have access to student academic records.

As this is our third year, we will be launching new trainings this summer. It is important to complete the trainings in a timely manner. I always say, you cannot follow a law, regulation or policy unless you understand it. These trainings will provide us with the needed information and resources to make our campus even stronger.

Please be on the look-out for an email invitation from Talent Web, our learning portal. Thank you in advance for your commitment to the University’s ethical and compliant culture. Compliance is truly everyone’s responsibility.

Healthy Cooking: Peach, Tomato, and Corn Pasta Salad

Ingredients:
- 8 oz. fusilli or bowtie pasta
- 2-3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 4 oz. crumbled feta or goat cheese
- 2 large ripe peaches, sliced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup raw corn off the cob (can sub canned or thawed frozen corn)
- 1/2 red onion, sliced thinly
- 5 oz. baby arugula or spinach
- Optional: quartered salami and avocado

Directions:
1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add some salt. Once water comes to a boil, add the pasta and cook until al dente, for about 7-9 minutes. Reserve a few tablespoons of pasta water before draining and putting pasta in a large bowl.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes until combined. Pour the dressing over the warm pasta and add a little pasta water. Add feta and give the pasta a toss.
3. Add in peaches, cherry tomatoes, corn, onion, and arugula. Toss to combine. Taste and add more lemon juice, salt, pepper, or olive oil if necessary.
4. Enjoy warm or cold!
On hot and humid days, your skin might feel sticky and overheated, and the air can feel so heavy that breathing becomes a chore. But what is it about humidity that can make the outdoors feel so stifling?

The answer is that high humidity can make us feel hotter than we do on drier days. That's because humidity — the amount of water vapor (moisture) air possesses — can make it difficult to shed excess body heat through sweat, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Weather Service.

Ordinarily, as sweat beads onto the surface of our skin, heat from our bodies evaporates that sweat into the air, thereby cooling our skin. Humidity, however, prevents sweat from evaporating as readily, because the surrounding air already has a high moisture content and can't absorb much more. And the less that moisture evaporates from our skin, the more uncomfortably warm we feel.

High temperatures enhance humidity's ability to thwart temperature regulation, because warm air can hold more moisture than cool air can. According to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, a 1-degree Fahrenheit (0.55-degree Celsius) rise in temperature equals as much as a 4% increase in atmospheric water vapor. This explains why humidity feels more uncomfortable in summer than in winter, even if the humidity levels happen to be identical.

Not only is hot and humid air stuffy and sticky on the skin, it's also a chore to breathe. But its "heaviness" isn't due to its high water vapor content, according to The Washington Post's Capital Weather Gang. The water vapor molecules that displace some of dry air's nitrogen and oxygen are actually less dense, meaning that moist air is actually lighter than dry air; however, because water vapor ousts small amounts of these gases, there's less oxygen in humid air to breathe in. What's more, our bodies are already taxed by being overheated, so it feels like it takes more work than normal to simply breathe.

While there's no set humidity threshold above which general comfort level begins to deteriorate, NOAA typically considers relative humidity (RH) levels of 50% or more, and dewpoints (a more direct measure of humidity) above 65 F (18 C) to be uncomfortably high.

The good news is that our bodies can adapt somewhat to high temperatures and high humidity — though, probably not quickly enough if, say, you were vacationing for a week in a tropical locale. "It takes an average of nine to 14 days to fully acclimate, depending on one's fitness level, body size and prior acclimation," Larry Kenney, a professor of physiology and kinesiology at Penn State, told Live Science in an email.

One of the first stages of heat acclimation is the dilation of blood vessels, which allows more blood to flow near the skin's surface, where excess heat can easily vent into the air outside of the body. Meanwhile, these dilated vessels translate into a lower heart rate and provide more fluid for sweating, Kenney said. By days three to five, sweat rates start to increase, he added. But this adaptation is only temporary. Similarly to how physical fitness and strength is lost if one skips a month at the gym, thermal adaptation can wane if it isn’t exercised.

As for the question of what temperature-humidity combo is beyond human tolerance, Kenney told Live Science this query drives his current research. With average temperatures and humidity levels projected to continue rising in some places due to climate change, an answer will likely present itself before you can utter the words, "It's not the heat; it's the humidity."

Source: Live Science
Madeline Nathe, UR Culinary Dietician: Nutrition Tips to Make Your Return to the Office Less Hangry

All employees will be returning to work soon here at the University of Richmond after working remotely for the past year and a half. This is sure to be a transition for many employees who have gotten into the routine of working from home. Just as you set up your office in your dining room, guest room, or living room even, you’ll have to readjust to your office on campus. Along with that comes getting used to commuting to work again, putting on real clothes (sorry yoga pants, your time to shine is over) and packing snacks and lunches. Picking the podcast for your commute is on you, but I’m here to help with ideas for office food. Below are some ideas that can make getting back to the office a little easier.

- Grab a variety of snacks to pack. Maybe it’s a pack of trail mix, granola bar, or a Greek yogurt – if you have a fridge! Aim for something that has carbohydrates and protein. The mix of these two nutrients will give you long lasting energy and curb your snack cravings when they hit.

- If you are someone who packs their lunch, I’d encourage you to find some new recipes or lunch box ideas to make your desk lunch more exciting! If you like to meal prep, try some of these ideas with flavorful, fresh ingredients (click here and here).

- If you really dread planning & packing a lunch like myself, try a lunchbox. Grab a carb, protein, fruit and/or veggie, and dipping sauce or healthy fat. Here are a few of my favorite combos:
  - **Charcuterie Lunchbox**: whole wheat crackers, 1-2 oz of your favorite cheese, 2 oz of sliced salami, and apple slices.
  - **Mezze Lunchbox**: your favorite olives, hummus, pita bread, and cucumbers.
  - **Picnic Lunchbox**: 2oz of deli sliced turkey, snack peppers, 1-2 oz mini mozzarella balls, and fresh cherries.
  - **Breakfast for Lunch-Box**: hardboiled eggs, orange slices, spoonful of peanut, almond or sun butter, and whole grain frozen waffles (toasted before you pack)

The main things to remember here is try to keep it balanced with your nutrition. Balance protein, carbs, and healthy fats to keep you feeling energized and full. And remember to go easy on yourself! Lunches can be harder than we anticipate. Give yourself a small goal of packing lunch 2 times a week, for example, and work your way up from there.