

# Gearing Up For A Great Time Outdoors



(NAPSA)—Are long winter days leaving you restless and stressed? Want to get outside but time and money are holding you back?

There's no need to plan a complex, expensive trip to ease the tension. With just a little effort, you can get outside—even in the dead of winter—to hike, bike, run, snowshoe, ski, climb and paddle the many recreational wonders around your home.

According to the American Hiking Society ([www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)), the U.S. has more than 200,000 miles of multi-use trails and 2,000 trail clubs. That means that fellow outdoor enthusiasts abound and great adventures are right around the corner just waiting to be explored.

By sticking close to home you can make the most of daylight, your budget and most importantly, your time. Excursions on local trails keep you fit during the dark days of winter, provide social time with friends and family and makes your daily routine more fun.

Gordy Skoog, merchandising director for outdoor retailer [Altrec.com](http://www.altrec.com), kayaks to work, year-round. It allows him to participate in his favorite activity even on workdays.

"Look for new ways to get mini-adventures into your regular week. Bike to your friend's house for dinner or hike along a peaceful trail after work to unwind. These

types of activities offer daily escapes, for little or no cost," Skoog says.

And it doesn't take much to get prepared. For close-to-home activities, you can usually pack light. Take inventory of your existing wardrobe and equipment. And seek out gear that works well for virtually any outdoor activity.

Experts agree that there are basic items that all day-trippers should have before heading out, including:

- Properly fitting shoes and socks
- Appropriate clothing
- Lightweight wind/rain jacket
- Daypack
- Water bottle

For a rundown of garb, guidebooks and gadgets for the great outdoors, as well as tips for the trail, log on to [www.altrec.com](http://www.altrec.com).

## Where to Go

Want to get out there and don't know exactly where to go? Local outdoor activity guidebooks are available at most bookstores. Community recreation departments also offer information. Make your first stop the Internet to research year-round locations and new hot spots. Visit online sites such as [www.ontheamericantrail.com](http://www.ontheamericantrail.com), [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), [www.railstrails.org](http://www.railstrails.org) and [www.reserveamerica.com](http://www.reserveamerica.com) for some of the best recreational trails, campsites, parks and greenways in the U.S. Chances are, there are some great adventures right in