

Making Life Better

Turn Your Summer Vacation Into A Staycation

by Samantha Clayton, certified personal trainer

(NAPS)—For many people, social distancing brings concern about summer plans. In previous years, summertime was when families planned their vacations. The kids would be out of school, the weather could be fantastic, and the days are longer—allowing optimal time to venture to new places, catch some sun and spend more time with friends and families.

Since you may have already been spending a lot more time with your family than you ever imagined due to coronavirus outbreak, you may be looking for ways to keep your family entertained. Between possibly working from home, managing your kids' schoolwork and maintaining a functioning household, this time probably hasn't felt much like a vacation.

Social distancing guidelines are likely to remain in effect in many places during the summer. Activities and entertainment options, lodging, and dining will be affected. The good news is, you really don't have to totally give up on enjoying the summer at home with your family. Here are some tips to make your staycation exciting for the whole family:

Fit Focused Days

Plan hiking trips or long walks or bike rides close to home. Enjoy nearby parks and take time to look over the architecture in your neighborhood. A quick Google search of interesting facts can help you to plan what you want to go to see. Being a tourist in your own community will help you have a greater appreciation for the place. Challenge your kids to identify certain plants, landmarks or wildlife when you're out walking. It will make the walks more engaging. Having prizes helps with motivation, too. Additionally, backyard games can be a blast—sprinklers, hula hoops and jump rope are things kids love.

Embrace The Farmers Markets

A trip to a farmers market is not just a treat, it's a great way to shop locally. Many of them have adopted social distancing guidelines, so they can be safe for family outings. These markets usually have beautiful fresh and seasonal options to explore, and perhaps find some fascinating new fruits and vegetables. Also, getting the kids involved in selecting ingredients for your meals may help spark their interest in healthier eating. Breaking your usual grocery shopping routine by browsing the stalls in beautiful weather can help spark a vacation vibe.

Create Your Own At-Home Retreats

With a little planning, you can make



You and your family can have a fun vacation without ever leaving home.

your own backyard or home feel like an enchanting vacation spot. For a spa weekend, buy or make your favorite products, and set up time to relax and treat yourself. Turn off all your tech distractions, set up a space outside or in a quiet room. You can even make spa water by cutting up some cucumber or fruit to flavor the water. Consider creating your own yoga retreat. Turn to your favorite online trainer, set up your mat in a designated space, light some candles or incense, and be sure to practice daily, with relaxing music. It's all about being creative.

Travel With Your Cooking

With travel on the back burner, consider themed cooking nights to help transport your taste buds to any destination. It can be really fun to make drinks, shakes and meals with ingredients from places that are on your future travel list. Enjoy a nice Italian spritzer with your pasta one night, try cooking a beautiful curry meal or ordering take-out from a restaurant you've never tried before. Take it a step further and print out some fun-facts you can find online or rent a movie about the particular culture you'll be indulging in that night; it's a great opportunity for your family to learn about other cultures through food.

Finally, take time to plan out your staycation in the same way you would with a travel vacation. Having an itinerary of what you want to do helps to prevent the lazy, do-nothing blues from taking over. A vacation is about rest, relaxation, discovery and recreation—all of those things can be accomplished right where you are. Studies have shown a positive correlation between taking vacation time and an overall feeling of well-being, so no matter what's on your itinerary, make sure to thoroughly enjoy yourself.

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