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SUMMER THRIVE GUIDE: COVID-19 EDITION

5 TRAVEL-FREE ADVENTURES TO PLAN
THIS SUMMER

YOUR VIRTUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY GUIDE

SELF-CARE APPS TO REFRESH YOUR
#STAYHOME ROUTINE

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF
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5 TRAVEL-FREE ADVENTURES TO PLAN THIS SUMMER



From jobs to routines, we have all experienced losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. But there's one thing every one of us is grieving together: the feeling of freedom.

For many Canadians, summer is synonymous with travel – a great expression of freedom – and, while we likely won't be crossing any borders this season, we can (and should!) safely embrace our sense of adventure in the coming weeks and months. Here are five ideas to consider:

1) HIT THE ROAD.

If you have a vehicle, there's a good chance you've only used it to drive to and from the grocery store or pharmacy in recent months. And for good reason! But while travel restrictions are in place and gas is still inexpensive, a local road trip complete with snacks, a good playlist and no deadline may provide the change of scenery you've been craving. Choose a destination with tree-lined roads, a quaint town you haven't seen in a while or some beautiful lookout points – or set out without any destination at all. Just remember to continue practicing physical distancing at all times. That means refraining from getting out of the car if others are present at designated roadside stops, avoiding public restrooms and staying at least two metres away from people if you need to stop for gas.

2) PLAY TOURIST IN YOUR TOWN.

If you've taken the same walk around your block what feels like a thousand times since #StayHome orders were put in place, consider choosing a different starting point. It might take a little experimenting with times and locations to find a place in your town or neighbourhood that is empty enough to facilitate proper physical distancing, but discovering or re-discovering a local landmark, green space, ravine, trail or residential community can provide a sense of wonder and excitement that many of us are lacking these days. Pack a blanket, a picnic, an outdoor speaker and some good reading material for a more special experience.

3) CAMP OUT.

A guaranteed homerun for children: dust off any old camping gear you have and set it up in the backyard for an afternoon, or better yet for an overnight adventure. Remember that kids don't care if they're at a highly-rated campsite; the outdoors and the change in surroundings is enough to ignite their curiosity. Look for bugs in the grass, sing campfire songs, listen to the birds and eat oven-toasted s'mores for dessert. Note: this is equally fun for grownups.

4) TAKE A SPIN.

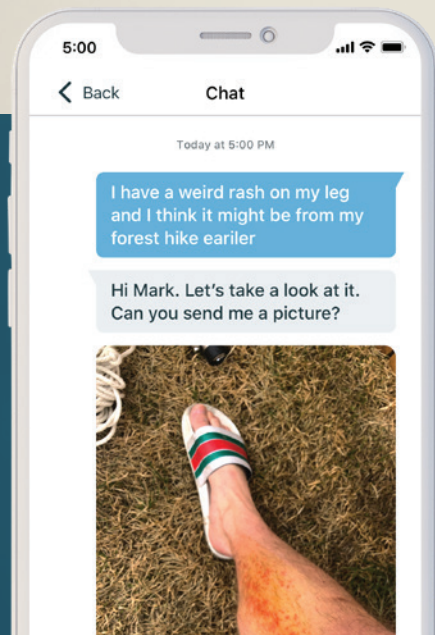
Take an outdoor bike ride for a literal change of pace and practice mindfulness as you feel the wind on your face. Particularly if cycling isn't a regular activity for you, take this opportunity to revel in the childlike joy it can evoke. Remember to wear a homemade mask while cycling to protect others from your droplets, and keep a distance greater than two metres from people biking in the same path (some studies show that droplets can linger further than two meters when people are active in the same pathway).

5) PLAN AN EPIC POST-PANDEMIC TRIP.

Previous generations often perused travel books and destination brochures for months before calling a travel agent to book a trip. Today it's become commonplace (pre-pandemic, at least) to book a last-minute flight or vacation with little planning or thought. If you're longing to cross an ocean or board a plane (and who isn't?), try using this mandated travel hiatus to dust off a world map and start dreaming about a future adventure. Wanderlust can be an art form! There are endless online resources available to learn about the world and the various experiences that we will be able to enjoy in the future. So regardless of when that epic trip will become reality, there's no time like the present to start planning for it. In fact, studies show that looking forward to travel is actually one of the most gratifying aspects of it.



From heat stroke to insect bites, summertime is full of health care questions. Keep medical advice at your fingertips with on-demand access to a trusted virtual care provider. [Click here](#) to learn more.





YOUR VIRTUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY GUIDE

For kids and adults alike, not being able to have a birthday party during quarantine can feel like a letdown. But in the spirit of making lemonade from lemons, we're sharing our four-step guide for hosting a virtual party that will make the "guest" of honour feel some extra love this year.

STEP ONE: MAKE A BIRTHDAY MONTAGE.

The ultimate quarantine birthday gift takes a little bit of legwork, but it's worth the effort. Use your phone's video editing feature or a service like Tribute to make a birthday montage full of kind video messages from loved ones. Not only will it be an unforgettable birthday card, but it will also serve as a time capsule of this unique life experience.

STEP TWO: EMBRACE A THEME.

A zoom party without a theme is just a meeting! It could be a tea party, a pirate adventure or an Old Hollywood soiree, but asking guests to dress up for the virtual occasion ups the ante and instantly makes the gathering feel more special.

STEP THREE: SEND DESSERT AHEAD OF TIME.

Consider supporting a local bakery and ordering a cupcake with a candle to be delivered to each attendee before the party, or drop off a packaged treat to each guest's doorstep. (Ordering from a professional bakery ensures safe food handling procedures, while delivering a packaged treat allows guests to open it safely ahead of time). Enjoying the same dessert "together" on a video call makes the experience feel more like the real deal.

STEP FOUR: PLAN AN ACTIVITY.

Having an activity to unite attendees during a virtual birthday party – especially for a child – will go a long way in keeping everyone engaged. It doesn't need to be fancy: dropping off a small container of bubbles, a colouring sheet (there are hundreds available online for free!), a puzzle or a party hat with a few stickers to decorate it will make for a fun change of pace for everyone. A great adult alternative is to use the Netflix Party extension to host a virtual movie night, complete with a chat box for running commentary!

Remember, while hosting a virtual birthday party is fun, it's OK if you're just not up for hosting or attending one this year. Connecting with loved ones on the phone or on a video call to let them know you're thinking about them is the most important act of kindness. **We are all in this together.**

**Your special day
comes once a year, be
sure to celebrate with
an amazing meal.**



Check out our #StayHome
Recipe Guide for delicious recipe
ideas! Looking for a healthy cake
alternative? Celebrate with the
refreshing free-of-refined-sugar
watermelon birthday "cake"!



SELF-CARE APPS
TO REFRESH YOUR
#STAYHOME ROUTINE

If your weekly screen time report has been on the rise in recent weeks, try not to beat yourself up about it. In addition to scrolling for news updates and staying connected with friends and family during the pandemic, many of us are leveraging our screens to support mindfulness, physical activity and other self-care practices.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, 32% of Canadian adults were using one or more mobile apps to monitor aspects of their health, and approximately one in four of us owned at least one smart device for health and wellbeing, according to a Canada Health Infoway study. Those numbers are sure to have skyrocketed in recent weeks, but with more than 320,000 health and fitness apps available in major app stores, finding a good variety of great ones that keep you motivated can be tricky.

Whether your smartphone is loaded with health apps or you haven't tried one yet, we've rounded up some of our favourites to help you refresh – or kickstart – your at-home self-care routine.

Nutrition

Keto. Intermittent fasting. Paleo. Vegan. Regardless of your nutrition philosophy, many people find using apps for food information and tracking extremely valuable. Consider trying:

- **My Fitness Pal:** Comprehensive and wildly popular, this app offers a food database, barcode scanner, recipe importer and take-out logger.
- **Nutrition Facts:** Good nutrition is even more important during times of stress (a global pandemic counts). Take a close look at your intake with the help of this app, which details nutritional properties of about 8,700 different food items.

Fitness and Exercise

Are you bored of your at-home workout circuit or your tried-and-true running route? These apps may be for you:

- **NeoU:** The Netflix of fitness, this app allows you to browse a variety of workouts and stream videos on-demand.
- **Strava:** Join a community of runners and cyclists and share routes, compete in challenges, track friends' progress and more.

Sleep

Even during "normal" times, approximately 30% of Canadians struggle with getting to or staying asleep, according to the University of British Columbia's Sleep Disorders Program, and it has been well-documented that more of us are suffering from sleep challenges thanks to the uncertainty of the coronavirus outbreak. You may want to try out one of these for support in getting more much-needed rest:

- **Sleep Cycle:** This simple, well-loved app helps track sleep patterns and offers recommendations for optimizing sleep.
- **Slumber:** A good resource for pre-sleep meditations, bedtime stories and background noise.

Mindfulness

Quieting the mind is perhaps more important for society as a whole – yet harder to achieve – now than ever. Both of the apps below were recommended on Statista's list of leading iPhone health and fitness apps in Canada 2019.

- **Headspace:** Downloaded 19,321 times in 2019, this app provides guided meditations that are ideal for mindfulness newbies.
- **Calm:** Even more popular than Headspace, Calm promotes stress management through daily meditation offerings, a sleep timer and master classes taught by inspiring authors and mindfulness gurus.

Digital Detox

Sometimes disconnecting from technology for a period of time is what's best for our mental, emotional and physical well-being. If this rings true for you, consider trying:

- **Moment:** Track your most commonly-used apps and access coaching to help you reduce total screen time.

Alternatively, try to incorporate these strategies into your daily device use:

- Turn off notifications: minimize your distractions and avoid the lure of alerts.
- Plan tech-free time in your day: work in some new technology-free rituals – take 15 minutes in your morning routine to do something you love before looking at your phone.
- Use your phone's grayscale feature: many apps aren't as exciting or stimulating in black and white. Try doing it for an hour a day and see how it affects your desire for your device.
- Commit to one screen at a time: who hasn't scrolled Instagram while on hour three of a Game of Thrones binge? Try to focus on one screen at a time to minimize your brain's acclimatization to distraction.

This article was adapted from its original publishing, which was produced by [TELUS Wise](#).

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF VIRTUAL MEDICAL VISITS



Studies show that virtual medical visits can address a wide range of medical concerns just as effectively as in-clinic appointments. For many Canadians, virtual medicine is also much more convenient – think no travel time, waiting rooms, or time off from work required – especially in a time when we are all trying to maintain physical distancing.

Even if you prefer to see your primary care doctor in person, there's a good chance you will be offered a virtual medical visit in lieu of a physical one in the near future, as clinics and physicians' offices work to reduce contact between patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual medical appointments may feel strange or even daunting at first, but the key to success is being prepared. Here's our guide to making the most out of your on-screen medical visit:

1) MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TOOLS. YOU WILL NEED:

- A webcam-enabled computer, smartphone or tablet with good quality speakers, a microphone and a supported web browser
- A good internet (wi-fi) connection or a phone data plan
- An email account so your doctor can email you a link to join the appointment
- A pen and paper to take notes
- A quiet indoor space with little distraction and good lighting
- A list of your current medications, if applicable (or better yet, the actual medications)

2) DO A LITTLE LEGWORK. BE SURE TO:

- Complete and submit any paperwork as instructed by your doctor's office, preferably a day in advance. Your information is updated on your electronic health record, ensuring that your doctor has current and accurate information prior to your visit.
- Take a moment to jot down any questions you have or symptoms you want to discuss with your doctor.

- Test your device's audio, camera and internet connection about 15 minutes before the call to make sure everything is in good working order. (Tip: The confirmation email from your provider may have a "Test Your Connection" link to help you do this.)

- Click on the link in the email provided by your doctor's office about five minutes before your call. You may see a window pop up in your web browser that asks for permission to share your camera. Be sure to accept / allow or your doctor won't be able to see you.

- Consider asking a partner, caregiver or trusted friend or family member to join you if they are living within your household. Depending on the type of visit, it may be helpful to have someone sit in to take notes or raise concerns if you forget something. If the individual can't be in the same location as you because they don't live in the same household, share the link and they can log in from any computer or mobile device.

3) KEEP THESE FACTORS IN MIND:

- If you are not seeing your regular doctor, you may need to discuss your pre-existing history.
- Don't be concerned if you don't see the health care provider on your screen when you "arrive" for your appointment. Just as in the clinic, you may have to wait a few minutes while the provider is with another patient. In some cases, you may even see an administrator or assistant before your doctor arrives.

Many Canadian family physicians who previously did not offer virtual care as part of their practices are seeing patients virtually or consulting them by phone during the COVID-19 outbreak. Contact your primary care provider for updates, and [click here](#) for the Canadian Medical Association's guidelines for seeking care during the coronavirus pandemic.

For ongoing remote healthcare access, consider a [virtual care platform](#) that provides on-demand care while allowing you to build a relationship with a trusted medical provider.





As provinces gradually reopen economies, planning for Return to Work (RTW) is top of mind for most employers. But it can be a daunting task fraught with unknowns.

We are here to help.

[Download the COVID-19: Return to Work Guiding Principles Playbook](#)

