

# Spring Into Physical Activity

*by Justin Oliver, President, Teachers Association for Physical and Health Education*

Now that Spring is upon us, many of us have started getting outside a bit more. Being more physically active has been on our minds, either because of our winter hibernation indoors or because of the warmer temperatures. One common physical activity that I see in my neighborhood (and that I participate in as well) is walking. Getting outside on a sidewalk or on a trail for a walk does wonders for us physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially, if we bring someone with us. The walk does not need to be long but I do encourage you to walk at a good pace. As a Physical Education specialist, I tell my students to move at a moderate to vigorous pace. Incorporating hills will definitely increase the intensity for you. If you want to add more of a total body workout, grab a pair of walking poles, or in my case, ski poles, on your walk and you should notice an increase in your heart rate.

If you want to increase your distance or time I suggest heading into the woods for a hike. Living in Digby County, we are blessed with a number of incredible hikes, many of which have great scenic views and varied terrain. It is not difficult for me to find a trail for my young family or one that is wheelchair accessible. Nova Scotia has four great seasons for hiking but there is something about the Spring where we can notice new growth of plants, flowers, and trees coupled with the sounds of birds singing as we meander and explore. If you are looking for a hike that is challenging at times, in the woods and then finishes with an outstanding view to have a lunch, Cape Split is a must but it should only be done once you have built up some endurance. Fall would be a good time to try it. I encourage you to check out Hike Nova Scotia's website for more information about trails in your area, walking groups to join, and courses to take.

If you are looking for more of a longer distance and cardiovascular workout, cycling has gained more popularity because of the pandemic and because of

the advocacy done to increase the number of bike lanes for cyclists. If you do not currently have a bike, it may be tricky to get one from a local bike shop because it seems production slowed during the lockdown a year ago while demand has gone up. Again, Nova Scotia has many cycling options available wherever you live in the province. We have the highest proportion of paved roads in the country and rural areas have a lot less traffic on them for you to explore and cycle at a comfortable pace. Waverley Road is my favourite road to cycle on in the province because of the smoothness of the pavement, the scenic lake views, and the respectful motorist who shares the road with you. You are bound to see

Although this is not an exhaustive list these are just a few suggestions for you to consider this Spring. They can be done individually or in small groups according to Public Health Guidelines. You can go for short distances or longer excursions depending on time, level of difficulty, and accessibility. Getting outside for physical activity will not only lower our stress levels (which all of us need), but also help us improve our quality of life because of the added benefits of being outside. I encourage you to get started if you haven't already because as Albert Einstein said, "a body in motion stays in motion."

Actively yours,  
Justin Oliver



other cyclists enjoying this road. Wherever you choose to ride, there is usually a place to stop to refuel with a coffee, pastry, or another snack of your choice. If you want to explore off the pavement on a mountain bike, The Gorge in Kentville or Victoria Park in Truro may be of interest to you. I have not been to Keppoch Mountain in Antigonish myself but it does come highly recommended from colleagues. Visit the Bicycle Nova Scotia's website for more of what cycling in Nova Scotia has to offer.

<https://www.thekeppoch.ca/>

<https://www.hikenovascotia.ca/>

<https://bicycle.ns.ca/>

<https://digbymun.ca/digby-trails.html>

<https://sites.google.com/view/taphe>