

Healthy Happenings

Beat the Heat: Prevent Heat-Related Illnesses

Summer inspires us all to go outside and explore the great outdoors. High temperatures and the risk of heat illness can happen in any national park environment whether its an urban, historical, mountainous, or desert park. Be prepared for high temperatures and the increased risk of heat-related illnesses while recreating.

What is a Heat-Related Illness?

- Heat strokes, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, sunburns and heat rash are all examples of heat-related illnesses.
- Heat-related illnesses are caused by your body's inability to cool down properly. The body normally cools itself by sweating, but sometimes sweating just isn't enough. When this happens, the body's temperature rises rapidly and may damage the brain or other vital organs. Heat-related illnesses are serious and can lead to death if not treated quickly.
- Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather:
- When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly.
- Participating in strenuous physical activities, such as hiking or biking, in hot weather
- Other factors that put you at higher risk of experiencing heat-related illness are age (infants, young children, people over 65), obesity, heart disease, poor circulation, fever, mental illness, dehydration, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use.

Know Before You Go

- Learn about heat-related illnesses. Familiarize yourself with the different types of heat-related illnesses, their causes, signs, and symptoms, and how to prevent them.
- Become familiar with the park's environment and weather conditions. Visit the park's website or call the park to find out more about the environment and expected weather conditions during your visit. Learn more about the severe weather hazards that you might encounter.
- Pick the right activity for you. Look at the "Plan Your Visit" section of the park's website to pick an activity that is right for you and your group. Consider how daily temperatures will impact what time you should start your activity (early morning and late afternoon tend to be cooler) and how long you should be out in the park. Use the NPS Trip Planning Guide to help you get ready for your adventure.
- Check the weather forecast and park alerts. Check the weather conditions and stop by the visitor center for information on heat alerts and high temperatures expected during your visit. If extreme heat is forecasted, schedule your activity for a cooler part of the day or plan to go out another day.

Prepare for Your Activity

- Plan for your water needs. Check that there are drinking water sources available at the park and along your trip route. Find out if there are potable refilling stations or natural water sources, which will require purification, along the trail if you plan to hike. If there are none, you will need to bring enough water with you for your trip.
- Protect your skin. Wear sunscreen and have a hat, sunglasses, and extra water to help combat the high temperatures and prevent damage from UV light. Always carry the Ten Essentials with you.
- Pick the right clothes. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes. Dark colors can absorb heat from the sun and increase your body temperature.
- Exercise early in the day or later in the evening. If possible, schedule your activity before 10am or after 4pm to avoid the worst heat of the day. Check the park website for tips on when to go and how to avoid the hottest temperatures.
- Do not leave children or pets in a parked vehicle. The temperature in a car can rise almost 20 degrees Fahrenheit in 10 minutes! Leaving a window cracked or open is not enough to stop the quick rise in



NPS photo by Kirsten Kears

temperatures. Children, who are left unattended, are at the greatest risk of heat illness that could lead to death.

Remember Water, Rest and Shade

- Drink water often. Stay hydrated and drink before you feel thirsty. The amount of water you need may increase if you are exercising. Plan to bring extra water, just in case you need it. Sports beverages can help replace salt and minerals that you lose in sweat.
- Rest often, and in the shade, if available. Soak yourself with water. On days with extreme heat, plan extra time to allow yourself to rest and cool off frequently during your activity. If water is available, consider completely soaking yourself to keep cool.
- Follow "No swimming" and "No wading" signs. Many parks have rivers or lakes that might look like an inviting place to cool down, but in reality, are very dangerous. Many of these water bodies are very deceptive: the shoreline may have slippery rocks, and there may be strong currents and cold water temperatures that could lead to injury or death. Follow park rules and regulations on swimming or wading.
- Take time to acclimate to high altitudes. Your body loses more fluids at high altitudes, increasing your risk of dehydration and heat-related illnesses. Allow several days to acclimate to high altitudes before starting any strenuous exercise, like hiking or biking.

Respond If Someone Is Experiencing a Heat-Related Illness

- Stop what you are doing.
- Move them into a cool, shaded area.
- Call 9-1-1 or find a ranger for help.
- While waiting for emergency responders, provide the person with drinking water.
- Try to cool the person down by splashing or soaking them with water, if available, and fanning them vigorously.



Don't let illness or injury ruin your vacation. We get you back on the trail! Walk-ins welcome.

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HEALTHY CLASSES

MONDAYS

Posture Fitness Class with Jessica Kiesel- 11:30am at the Moab Recreation & Aquatic Center (MRAC), 374 Park Ave. For info: 505-412-3132

Community Yoga- 6-7:15 pm at the Moab Arts & Recreation Center, 111 E. 100 North. Classes are by donation (suggested \$10). Bring your yoga mat or borrow one of ours & join local yoga instructors Kristi Paul, Porscha Doucette, Sam Metzner & Meagan Coy. For info: 435-259-6272

TUESDAYS

Sheng Zhen Tuesdays with Lisa- two meditation forms from 1:-1:45 seated from a chair and a standing form taught from 2:00-3:00 pm at the Grand Center Vitality Room at 182 North 500 West. Contact certified teacher, Lisa DeRees 435-260-9678 for details.

Kundalini Yoga & Gong Meditation- 5:30pm at 125 E. 200 North, Historic Helen Taylor Home. Teacher: Gregory Lee Hood. By donation. For info: 713-817-7859.

WEDNESDAYS

Yoga Basics- 11:30-12:45pm at Moab Recreation & Aquatic Center, 374 N Park Ave. Props available. Drop-in prices. Donation based for AARP Medicare Sup, SilverSneaker, Fit members. Questions? Contact Star Kolb mindivine@gmail.com 406-291-6408

THURSDAYS

Posture Fitness Class with Jessica Kiesel- 11:30am at the Moab Recreation & Aquatic Center (MRAC), 374 Park Ave. For info: 505-412-3132

All Levels Sheng Zhen Gong – every Thursday 5:30-7pm with certified teacher Don Leathers at the Moab Arts & Recreation, 111 E. 100 North. 435-259-8123.

Kundalini Yoga & Gong Meditation- 5:30pm at 125 E. 200 North, Historic Helen Taylor Home. Teacher: Gregory Lee Hood & Music Sound Therapist Annette Kearn, PhD. By donation. For info: 713-817-7859

SATURDAYS

10am Kundalini Yoga & Gong Meditation at 2950 Red Moon Lodge, Old City Park Road. Teacher: Gregory Lee Hood & Music Sound Therapist Annette Kearn, PhD. By donation. For info: 713-817-7859

**CHECK YOURSELF
AFTER YOU'VE
WRECKED YOURSELF.**

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