10 Spring Activities for MS to Get You Outside Today

by LIBBY SELINSKY

10 Awesome Spring Activities for MSers

Spring is really a great season for people with multiple sclerosis (MS). It's like Goldilocks — not too hot, not too cold, just right!

Many of us have been cooped up all winter and the sun is finally saying, "Hello, it's time to get outside and bask in the season of rebirth and beauty."

When spring hits every year, I like to get started on all of my favorite things I have been holding off for many cold and dreary months. There is so much to do that it is hard to decide what to do first.

Also, I have to confess, I am just getting over treatment for my first MS relapse in many years.

I am blessed that it has been almost eight years since my last relapse. However, I have been taken down a few pegs. My spring has to start slow and easy this year before I am able to build myself back to my old self again, but I refuse to let such good weather go to waste, so here goes!

Here is my list of favorite springtime activities that are sure to brighten an MSer's spirits!

Go Walking or Take the Hiking Trails

If you have any great trails to walk within a reasonable driving distance, go and rekindle your romance with nature there.

I have a gorgeous park about a mile from my home. We have several miles of trails, with differing terrains, that we can walk or run.

I make a point of getting out there in the morning hours after my son goes to school. The mornings are ripe with little creatures, making noise everywhere. Plus, the trail is less busy.

A less busy trail allows me the freedom of walking at my pace, with the added benefit of trying out my running again, without anyone seeing me fail at it.

I may or may not have failed at it this morning — tomorrow is another day.

Enjoy a Nice Bicycle Ride Around the Neighborhood

Bicycles are a great way to get out and enjoy the world, while also gaining a low-impact workout. One of the only things I have come to enjoy about our defunct national rail system is the seemingly endless miles of new bike and hike trails that have emerged all over the country.

I have successfully mapped out a trail that runs from northeastern Ohio all the way to Washington, D.C., using only rail trails and side roads. I am determined to make the trip one day. For now, I am training up on the old Ohio Erie Canal Trail that stretches almost the entire distance of the state of Ohio from north to south.

My son and I spent many days of last year's spring on these trails. We have made countless great memories, exploring the outdoors and having picnics on our way. We plan on making more memories this year too!

Take the Whole Family Out for Picnics

One of the most customizable and enjoyable activities I can think to do outdoors is have a picnic. I will picnic every chance I get; I love to picnic alone, with one person or as a group.

The great thing about this activity is it is truly open for anyone, of any ability, to participate. It is a celebration of the outdoors in the finest way.

You can come up with a big fancy to-do, or have a nice private meal under a tree in bloom. Seriously, if you haven't eaten with your toes in the grass under the shade of a blossoming cherry tree in a while, don't you think it's time you have?

Next page: six more wonderful spring activities for MS patients.

Try Pinhole Photography

Random enough for you? I have to admit, this is more my husband's hobby than mine. However, I have spent many lazy days with him scouting out photo-worthy landscapes. I have fallen in love with the process.

There is a craft to a pinhole photograph and the resulting capture is always a surprise. Taking the time to work an art at its most basic roots is satisfying in the deepest way possible.

You don't even need to focus solely on photography. There are many other arts that can be transported to the outdoors.

Painting and writing are other favorites of mine — the main goal is just to allow nature in as a muse.

Grab Your Favorite Book and Read

There is no place in the world I would rather read than sitting next to the river near my house, under the ash tree. The leaves allow the perfect amount of light to filter through and my mind can drift away from all of my daily stresses, both physical and emotional.

Nothing beats a great book, in a perfect place, with the birds singing their tune in the background.

Do a Little Gardening

What would spring be without a beautiful garden? Gardening is another activity that can be easily curtailed to your abilities and surroundings.

The size can range from a small planter in your window to a large, intricate masterpiece that covers acres and acres of land. I keep my sights low: I have two small gardens in the front of my house.

I had been planning a quarter acre of raised beds, but that was before this relapse. While I am a bit sad to miss out on all the bounty of vegetables I had planned, however, I am happy to settle for some gorgeous flowers and herbs instead.

Go Fishing

We are not naturally good fishermen in our household. I love catching a rainbow trout now and again, but my preference is to go crabbing. We spent many days out in Washington State throwing crab nets off the dock.

I have to be honest, I cannot remember if we crabbed in the spring while we were there — I forget when the season opens. It is just that every day felt like spring out in Seattle and I really miss eating that Dungeness crab.

Visit Local Farmer's Markets

Farmer's markets are really taking hold across the country — and for great reason too! Going to your local farmer's market is a wonderful way to buy local produce and also socialize with your community.

This activity is laidback and can be enjoyed at any pace, with anyone you want to spend your Saturday morning with. I love to grab a cup of coffee and wander around aimlessly, taking in all the town chatter, while basking in the piles of produce and flowers everywhere.

Plan a Camping Trip

Camping is great because it gives you an excuse to buy lots of gear. You could be a lightweight packer, like my husband, but I prefer to camp in comfort.

I am one of those who enjoys driving up to my campsite. However, hiking, climbing, and even canoeing up to your favorite spot (if you are able to), are also fantastic ways of creating a trip that is perfect for you.

Go Boating, Kayaking or Canoeing Down a River

I am one of those people who would be on the water year-round if it were possible. I think I was a whale in a prior life. All kidding aside, nothing is better than getting out on the open water and basking in the sunlight!