

# Exercising Outdoors during Allergy Season



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It is finally here – after a long, cold winter, spring is beginning to emerge. After months stuck on the treadmill or in crowded group fitness classes, the prospect of exercising outside in the sunshine is almost too good to be true. While the first tulips and daffodils are promises of warmer weather to come, they also serve as an unwelcome reminder for more than 50 million Americans that peak allergy season is right around the corner.

If you are among the millions affected by allergies, the prospect of exercising outdoors may seem out of the picture. However, there are steps you can take to still enjoy the springtime weather during your physical activity.

1.

### **Check the pollen count.**

Check your local weather station for when pollen and mold counts are lowest, and schedule your exercise then. Pollen counts typically reach their peak around noon into early afternoon, and are lower in the morning and late evening hours. Pollen counts are also lower during chilly, wet periods and higher during warm, breezy weather.

2.

### **Lessen the cardio.**

Choose less intense exercises when you are outside. The faster you breathe, the more allergens you take into your lungs. Instead of going for a run or vigorous bike ride, choose to practice yoga or strength train while outdoors.

3.

### **Avoid pollutants.**

Avoid exercising near polluted areas, such as busy roads and construction sites. If you are allergic to pollen, avoid grassy fields and heavily wooded areas.

4.

### **Get rid of the evidence.**

Shower and change clothes immediately after your workout. Allergens such as pollen or mold cling to your clothes and skin. By removing those after a workout, you will not be breathing them in throughout the rest of the day. Even if you do not experience a reaction to allergens, use this best practice to protect friends and family members with allergies.

5.

### **Check for resources.**

Visit the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology's website for more information on the specific types of plants and trees that are most likely to cause allergy flare-ups. Learn more at [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org).

## **Fast Facts on Allergies**

- **Allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever, is an allergy caused by pollen or dust. The most common symptoms of hay fever are a runny nose, itchy and watery eyes, sneezing, and nasal congestion.**
- **Allergies are the fifth leading chronic disease for American adults.**
- **Ragweed causes up to 75 percent of all hay fever, or allergic reactions. One ragweed plant can produce up to one billion pollen grains.**
- **Approximately one in five Americans suffers from allergies.**
- **If one parent has allergies, the child has a 1 in 3 chance of developing allergies. If both parents have allergies, the likelihood of the child developing**

Sources: WebMD ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)), Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ([www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)), American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology ([www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org))