

# Put some Spring in your steps for fitness

**“Moving Grays Harbor”  
By Maryann Welch**

I love this time of year. As I am writing this column the sun is shining with the promise of spring and I can hardly wait to get home from work to mow the lawn. Planting time for the garden isn't far off and my mind is filled with the list of outdoor projects I'm itching to get started on. I know many of you have heard the recent reports that you don't have to leave your house to get a good work-out and spring time is proof of that for me! From the “spring cleaning” inside to the yard work outside I know I am burning plenty of calories while I work.

As a matter of fact, the spring time burst of outdoor work was the motivation I needed to start exercising years ago. After working in the yard all weekend I could hardly walk on Monday and experienced soreness in places I didn't know had muscles! That drove me to get in shape so yard work could be more enjoyable.

I recently got a suggestion from my friend Thirza Krohn, a Librarian at the Aberdeen branch of Timberland Library, to highlight ways your local library can contribute to healthy living. Now I know that many of you don't think of your library when you think of exercise, but as it turns out, April 15-21 is National Library Week so this was perfect timing to highlight the connection. For those of you who don't

know, the library not only has books on fitness, they also have some fitness videos, books on tape and a new favorite of mine, downloadable books and music (for portable MP3 players) – I really enjoy listening to books on tape when I walk alone and for those of you who struggle with motivation for activity, this just might be the approach that works for you. Get lost in a book as you walk around your neighborhood or mow your lawn – what a great escape!

Thirza also provided me with a list of resources that are not what you would normally think of as exercise. From beachcombing and beach crafting to hiking and discovering edible plants, there are truly options for endless pastimes that will get you out and about and moving. She also pointed out books on rock hounding and bird watching – Bowerman Basin is right in our backyard and the bird watching season is fast approaching. Thirza suggested that you can call or visit your local library to check on more titles as well as visiting them on the web at [www.trlib.org](http://www.trlib.org). Checking out materials is fast, easy and convenient. Come together @ your library® during National Library Week and let them help you find your fitness muse.

Spring also gets me thinking about other activities that I want to do outside....like kayaking. I have always wanted to have my own kayak as a way to enjoy our beautiful local waterways while working on my back and arm strength and endurance as well – something that I tend to not get enough of as I get older. I'm seriously considering a double pedal/paddle kayak to get a leg workout as well. A quick search on the library's website and I find that they have books available on kayaking techniques, places to kayak in the Pacific Northwest and even a DVD version of paddling techniques. I think I have found the perfect place to

start my kayaking quest. I have the vehicle – a station wagon - now I just need the rack and my husband to go with me!

Another “national” something week coming up is turn off tv week. This just happens to be the week after national library week (April 23-29) and is the week that is typically full of program re-runs. What a great opportunity to start a new habit. Go to the library during the week of April 15-21 and get yourself set up to do something for you. Download a book on tape and set a goal to listen to it during the next week (only listen to it while you are active); take the kids to the park or local elementary school and play with them for an hour – you’d be surprised at the creative games they can come up with; take the opportunity to walk while your child is at practice instead of waiting in the car; or explore a new trail with your dog (for a list of easy trails, go to our website @ [www.ghphss.org](http://www.ghphss.org) and look under the Moving Grays Harbor tab. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you can print out your own trail map).

This is definitely the season that we all succumb to the feeling of “spring fever” – harness those feelings into a new activity and you just might find that you are feeling like a “spring chicken” in no time. Happy spring!

*Maryann Welch is the director of Grays Harbor County’s Public Health and Social Services Department.*

*If you have questions about becoming more active or have information about free or low-cost activity in the area, contact the public health department at 532-8665 ext. 483, e-mail us at [moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us](mailto:moving@co.grays-harbor.wa.us) or visit our web site at [www.ghphss.org](http://www.ghphss.org).*