

Benefits of Camping

Camping has many benefits including:

- Improving mental health and reducing stress
 - <https://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/mental-health-benefits-outdoors/>
- Relationship building and family connectedness
- Physical activity
- Unplugging
 - https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-are-the-health-benefits-of-unplugging_b_8917956
- Connection with nature and increased appreciation for the environment
- Skill development and educational opportunities
- Confidence building

Why Camping is Good for You:

<https://koa.com/blog/the-benefits-of-camping-why-camping-is-good-for-you>.

Things to determine

- Location
You can camp in your front yard, backyard, on your deck or in your living room.
 - You may choose to set up on the most outer perimeter of your property/bubble, if you don't plan to rely on items inside your house.
 - Ideally, you will want a flat and dry location with a soft surface.
 - As you are close to home you can easily use items you own to assist with creating the perfect site.
 - Tarp to keep an outdoor tent dry
 - Form mats (children floor mats) to create a soft tent surface
- Weather
You will want to watch the weather forecast and prepare your camping outing for the evening that has the most favourable weather for the type of camping experience you wish to have.
 - Ideally, you will want to enjoy outdoor camping when it is warm and dry, so you can spend lots of time outside and your equipment will not get wet, and you will not be cold while you are sleeping.
 - Indoor camping can be enjoyed no matter the weather and is great if you have can't wait for suitable weather conditions.

Items you will need (supplies and packing)

- Shelter
 - Tent
 - Learn to set up a tent: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/monter-setup>
 - Recreational Vehicle (motorhome, camper trailer, etc.)

- Build your own tent
 - Learn/practice building a survival shelter. This can be a fun and educational activity even if you don't use the shelter for sleeping during your camp out.
 - There are lots of videos and resources available online. Video on how to build a emergency survival shelter with no tools or materials: <https://youtu.be/vCT9K72ByUE>
 - Depending on the materials you have available you can find lots of "how to" instructions online on how to build a shelter, especially tarp shelters.
 - Video on how to build an emergency shelter using one tarp: <https://youtu.be/vCT9K72ByUE>
 - When indoor camping you can set up a tent, if you have one or you can build your own blanket fort to sleep in.
- Bedding

Whether you are planning to sleep outside on the ground or on the living room floor you need to consider a comfortable sleep area.

 - Mattress
 - If you don't have a camping mattress, you may have items around your house to use such as yoga mat, foam floor mats, lawn chair cushions, etc. You can find lots of ideas online.
 - Bedding
 - The amount of bedding you will need depends on the weather;
 - If you have a sleeping bag check the temperature it is certified for.
 - Take an extra blanket as the temperature may drop during the night.
 - Take your favourite pillow to help with getting a comfortable night sleep.
 - Lighting
 - You will need to consider lighting for when it gets dark. Everyone should have access to a flashlight.

Tips:

 - You can use outdoor lights over your door to give addition light outdoors during the night.
 - You can turn on nightlight or a light in a nearby room for additional light during the night when camping inside.
 - Wearable lights and/or reflective bands can help children feel safe and help them from getting lost in the dark.
 - Meals/snacks
 - You will want to plan your meals before the camp outing; this can be a great group experience that everyone can help with.
 - Camping meals and snack ideas

- <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/recettes-recipes>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/parents/food/view/10-dietitian-approved-camping-snacks-to-keep-your-kid-fuelled-and-satisfied>
- <https://www.healthstandnutrition.com/healthy-camping-food-ideas/>
- Your Camp Kitchen: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/cuisine-kitchen>
- Cooking
 - Whether inside or out, if you are planning to cooking during your camp out, you will need to consider the amount of time it will take to cook everything for the meal, as well as after meal clean up.
 - <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/food-safety-outdoors>
 - This could be a great time to practice outdoor cooking while you are still close to home.
 - You will need to consider the supplies you will need including: pots, pans, utensils, mixing bowls, cooking oil/cooking spray, sauces, seasonings, etc.

Camping Checklist: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/liste-list>

Safety (fire and cooking)

- Fire safety
 - A campfire is a popular camping activity and may be a cooking source. If you are planning to have a fire for pleasure or cooking, please read your local fire regulations and check the forecast.
 - You need to either reschedule or plan other activities/meals, if:
 - There is a fire ban in your area
 - You are unable to meet the fire regulations
 - The forecasted weather conditions are unfavourable.
 Public Reminders for Forest Fire Season:
https://www.faa.gov.nl.ca/forestry/forest_fires/reminder.html
 - How to build a fire: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/feudecamp-campfire>
- Outdoor Cooking
 - Outdoor cooking can be a treat but you need to consider the safety regulations, read all instructions on the equipment you are using and follow all provincial and municipal regulations.

- BBQ (gas and charcoal)
 - Gas stove (propane, butane, fire, etc.)
 - Types of stoves: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/equipement-equipement/rechauds-stoves>
- Night time safety
 - Everything is different in the dark, even your own backyard or living room. Some campers can become uncomfortable in the dark, it's important to put some measures in place to ensure everyone's comfort and safety.
 - Boundaries: you will need to determine and set a boundary for everyone to stay inside of. You may want to make the boundary smaller once it becomes dark.
 - Unfenced backyard, you will need to clearly define the perimeter.
 - Inside campers may want to keep to just one room of the house once it becomes dark.
 - Rules
 - Establishing the rules of the camping experience should be a group activity, allowing everyone to express what is important to them.
 - Rules should be clear and followed by all campers.
 - Types of rules to consider
 - House use
 - Night time wake up
 - Boundaries
 - Equipment use
 - Etc.

Safety Tips: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/secureite-safety>

Activities

No camping experience is complete without fun camping activities; this is when memories are made.

When planning activities it is important to consider the following:

- Safety – *is the following safe for participants and appropriate for the activity: location, space and equipment?*
- Developmentally appropriate – *is the skill and equipment required developmentally appropriate?*
- Unique – *is this a new experience?*
- Mastery – *is the skill required too challenging or simplistic for the participants?*
- Participation – *Is the activity inclusive? Will the activity be successful with the number of participants?*

- Play – *will the activity be fun and give participants the opportunity to be creative?*
- Caring Adult & Friends – *will the participants have the ability to work together and be supported by a caring leader?*
- Campfire
 - Indoor campfire can be a great craft activity.
 - All you need is some paper, scissors and a little creativity
 - Fire building is a great activity and teaching experience. This can be a great opportunity to teach/learn fire building as a survival skill.
 - https://youtu.be/E_9te0nq3A
 - Campfire songs are a traditional campfire activity and can be a great sharing and learning experience. You don't need a musician to enjoy singing around the fire.
 - Adult can teach younger campers songs from their youth
 - Action songs are a fun way to add physical activity. Plus, stay warm on a chilly night
 - If you don't know many songs, you can find lots of family friendly songs online
 - <https://www.care.com/c/stories/3343/50-great-camp-songs-for-kids/>
 - Roasting
 - Many favourite camping snacks can be shared around the campfire. This can be another great sharing and teaching experience.
 - There are links to healthy snack ideas listed above
- Skills
 - Camping can to an opportunity to learn and teach new skills.
 - Fire and shelter building are listed above
 - Orienteering
 - You can take out the map and compass or you can draw your our map for a fun game of treasure hunting.
 - Knot-tying
 - Whittling and craving
 - Nature Photography
- Traditional Games
 - If you don't have store bought games, try making your own games.
 - <https://www.partselect.com/JustForFun/DIY-Lawngames-For-The-Labor-Day-Weekend.aspx>
 - Board Games
 - Card Games
 - Washer Toss
 - Ladder Golf
 - Horseshoes
 - Pick up sticks

- Loose parts play
 - Not all activity has to be structured; there are many benefits to unstructured play.
 - Unstructured play allows freedom to explore and be creative without predetermined rules or guideline. An item can become anything your imagination wants it to be.
 - Gather items you have around your home, such as boxes, containers, sticks, buckets, rope, chalk, etc. and see what you can come up with.
 - For more ideas visit:
 - <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidsare/early-care/tip-pages/all/loose-parts-what-does-this-mean>
 - Loose Parts Play Video <https://youtu.be/PFEg6Mlc490>
 - Making use of Loose Parts <https://activeforlife.com/making-use-of-loose-parts/>
- Additional Resources:
 - <https://activeforlife.com/10-ways-to-backyard-adventure/>
 - <https://activeforlife.com/backyard-camping/>
 - <https://activeforlife.com/8-active-chalk-games/>

Share your Camping Experience

Why not share your experience with friends and family outside your home bubble, by inviting them to camp with you online.

Ideas to do online with others while camping:

- Craft
 - Plan a craft with supplies that you both have at home and make it together online
- Meal
 - Plan to have your meal at the same time and share conversation
- Campfire songs
 - Plan your campfire for the same time and you can sing songs, listen to music and share stories together