

Focus on the Family

**LONGTERM
HEALTH**

**FUN AT
THE LANES**

**INDOOR
ACTIVITY
IDEAS**



Kids can set the pace for longterm health

Long-term health is not something that many young people routinely consider. After all, it's easy to feel invincible during one's childhood and adolescence. But the steps that young people take early on can affect their health as they get older.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, establishing healthy behaviors during childhood and adolescence is more beneficial to long-term health than trying to change poor behaviors in adulthood. The following are some ways young people can set the course for healthy outcomes throughout life.

Prioritize healthy foods

According to the childhood recreation group Mountain Kids, habits and actions performed subconsciously are hard to break because repeat habits trigger dopamine in the brain, causing pleasurable feelings that reinforce the behavior.

So grabbing a slice of cake after school for a snack becomes rote. Instead, stocking the refrigerator and pantry with sliced fruits and vegetables, low-fat yogurt, lean protein like hummus and whole wheat dipping crackers can set the course for more responsible eating behaviors.

Increase physical activity

The CDC says 21% of adolescents aged 12 to 19 are obese, and two in five students have a chronic health condition. A sedentary lifestyle may be one contributor to these statistics. At home and in school, adults can encourage physical activity as an effective means to



Children who learn healthy behaviors at a young age are more likely to continue those good habits into adulthood, which ultimately benefits their long-term health.

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prevent obesity.

The Department of Health and Human Service recommends that children and adolescents age 6 and older get at least one hour a day of moderate or vigorous aerobic activity, such as running or biking. Muscle- and bone-strengthening activities also are recommended. Kids who learn early on to appreciate physical activity reap long-term benefits that extend well into adulthood.

Eat meals, shop together

Kids can learn what healthy eating

and portion control looks like if it is modeled by their parents. Children should be involved with reading nutrition labels and understanding the ingredients that comprise the foods they commonly eat.

When dining out, choose restaurants that utilize menus that indicate the caloric content of meals. Children will learn to recognize and embrace nutritious foods and that can continue into adulthood.

Eating as a family also benefits mental health. Stanford Children's Health says eating together as a family can encourage

children's confidence in themselves and improve communication. Children who regularly converse and interact with their parents may be less likely to engage in substance abuse or act out at school.

Avoid tobacco

Tobacco and nicotine vaping products can contribute to many negative health conditions. Youngsters who avoid these products throughout their lives may improve longevity and reduce their risk for various illnesses.

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START YOUR GENEALOGY JOURNEY

Genealogy fascinates much of the general public. The number of people learning more about their families and heritage through genealogy increases year to year. According to FamilyTree.com, genealogy is the second only to gardening as the most popular hobby in the United States.

People explore genealogy for many reasons, including learning about their ancestry.

Genealogy and family history are subtly different

Genealogy is a line of descent traced continuously from an ancestor, while family history is defined as the history or narrative of a family. They are intertwined but not synonymous.

Vital records are key

Genealogists explore vital records to obtain information about their ancestors. Vital records include documentation of ancestors' life events, including births, deaths, marriages, and more. Civil registration began at different times around the world, and even across North America, so it's often challenging, though entirely possible, to develop an accurate history.

Surnames may be different

Surnames were not commonplace until around the eleventh century in Europe, according to S.C. Perkins, who is the author of a mystery series featuring a Texas genealogist as the protagonist. Surnames fall into four general categories:

- Place or geographical features (i.e., "Hill;")
- Nicknames or appearance, "Little;"
- Occupation, "Baker;" and
- Father's name, "Peterson."

Some names may not have been recorded correctly, so a person's last name actually may be a derivative of the real name or a misspelling. Often immigrants changed their own surnames to make them sound more American or more native to wherever they were emigrating to.

Cities change

Discovering records of ancestors can be even more challenging because of shifting borders or municipalities, which change over time. The Family Tree Factbook provides European maps from throughout history and a timeline of European border changes that can help with research.

Preserve family history

In addition to uncovering mysteries of one's heritage, dabbling in genealogy helps to preserve family history by confirming tales and tracing ancestors' journeys. It also may help shed light on the history of artifacts or jewelry that ancestors owned and passed down.

Connect with others

A motivator behind genealogy research is to uncover relatives. Cousins from all over the world can discover they are related and bridge the gap between them through shared genetics and history.

(METRO CREATIVE)

One of the ways students can alleviate pressure is to prepare for tests in advance so they're as comfortable as possible on the day of the test.

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How students can prepare for standardized tests

Standardized tests remain a significant part of the academic experience for millions of students at all grade levels. Though many colleges and universities no longer require the SAT or ACT for admission, experts note that many of those schools still value such tests and how applicants who choose to take them perform.

Students who want to take standardized tests can take various steps to ensure they do their best and make the decision to take the tests work to their advantage.

Utilize preparation services

Standardized tests carry a lot of weight, even at schools that no longer require them, so professional test preparation services can be a good investment. Parents can work with their children to find a tutor

or preparation program in advance of their scheduled testing date.

Some programs are lengthier and more intensive than others, but families can identify which type of program can most benefit the student. Some students may just need a post-summer refresher, while others may benefit from a more intensive program.

Look for free programs and resources

A student's school may offer a free test preparation program as testing season draws closer. In addition, books on preparing for tests may be available for free at your local library.

In the latter example, parents and students should confirm that any preparation guidebooks are up-to-date. Testing has changed significantly over the years, so students won't want to be

looking over prep materials that no longer reflect modern tests.

Take practice tests

Practice tests can be invaluable. Such tests can indicate where students are strong and any areas they should seek to improve. Students who have a tutor or are enrolled in a test prep program can go over their practice test results with their tutor or instructor to identify areas for improvement and strategies to perform better when the tests count.

Prep for the test

Prepare as if you're taking the test early. It's never too early for high school students to begin thinking about college.

Students who plan to take standardized tests like the SAT and ACT are often urged to do so in their junior

year of high school. Such a timeline affords students ample time to retest if they feel they can improve their scores. Though sophomore year might seem early to start preparing for the SAT and ACT, it's the perfect time to do so for students who plan to take the test in the first half of their junior year. This gives them ample time to find a tutor or test preparation program so they can perform their best.

Time practice tests

Standardized tests like the SAT and ACT are timed. Students can prepare for that by taking timed practice tests. The more acclimated students become to testing situations, the better they're likely to perform. Standardized tests can put pressure on students.

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FUN AT THE LANES

Towne and Country offers leagues, open bowling

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Towne and Country Lanes, of Burlington, sees an influx of customers heading indoors to participate in multiple leagues and open bowling days during the winter and spring.

Theresa Riemer, general manager for Towne and Country, said the Burlington venue also experiences an increase in people participating in winter and into spring.

“Winter is our busiest time of the year by far,” she said. “Around here, those that don’t ski or ice skate, or do outdoor sports want to come inside.”

The winter-spring season, she said, typically runs from October through April and consists of leagues for all ages and skill levels, along with a growing youth program typically held on Saturday mornings.

Youth boom

According to Riemer, the youth program has increased significantly for 2022-23, with more children ages four to 18 coming in on Saturday mornings.



above: Towne and Country Lanes, of Burlington, features 18 lanes for customers of all ages and skill levels. **right:** Cotie Holbeck, of Towne and Country Lanes, rolls the ball down the lane for a strike.

JASON ARNDT *Focus on the Family*



“Our Saturday morning program has exploded this year. The Saturday morning program has a lot of people,” she said.

The younger crowd, she said, typically starts with bumper bowling with the rails up to prevent gutter balls in the lanes.

“They will be bowling anywhere from two to three games every Saturday depending on what league they are in,” she said. “We have coaches here for

each of the leagues to help with basic instructions all the way up to advanced instructions for the older kids.”

Additionally, Towne and Country Lanes serve as the home venue for Burlington, Catholic Central and Wilmot Union high school bowling programs.

For the second consecutive year, Burlington and Catholic Central have formed a boys varsity co-op program, while Wilmot has varsity and junior

varsity co-ed squads.

Additionally, unlike last year, Burlington High School finally has enough girls to form a varsity team, according to Riemer.

“We did not have a girls team last year, but we have a girls team this year,” Riemer said. “The boys team, we have more members this year. The Wilmot

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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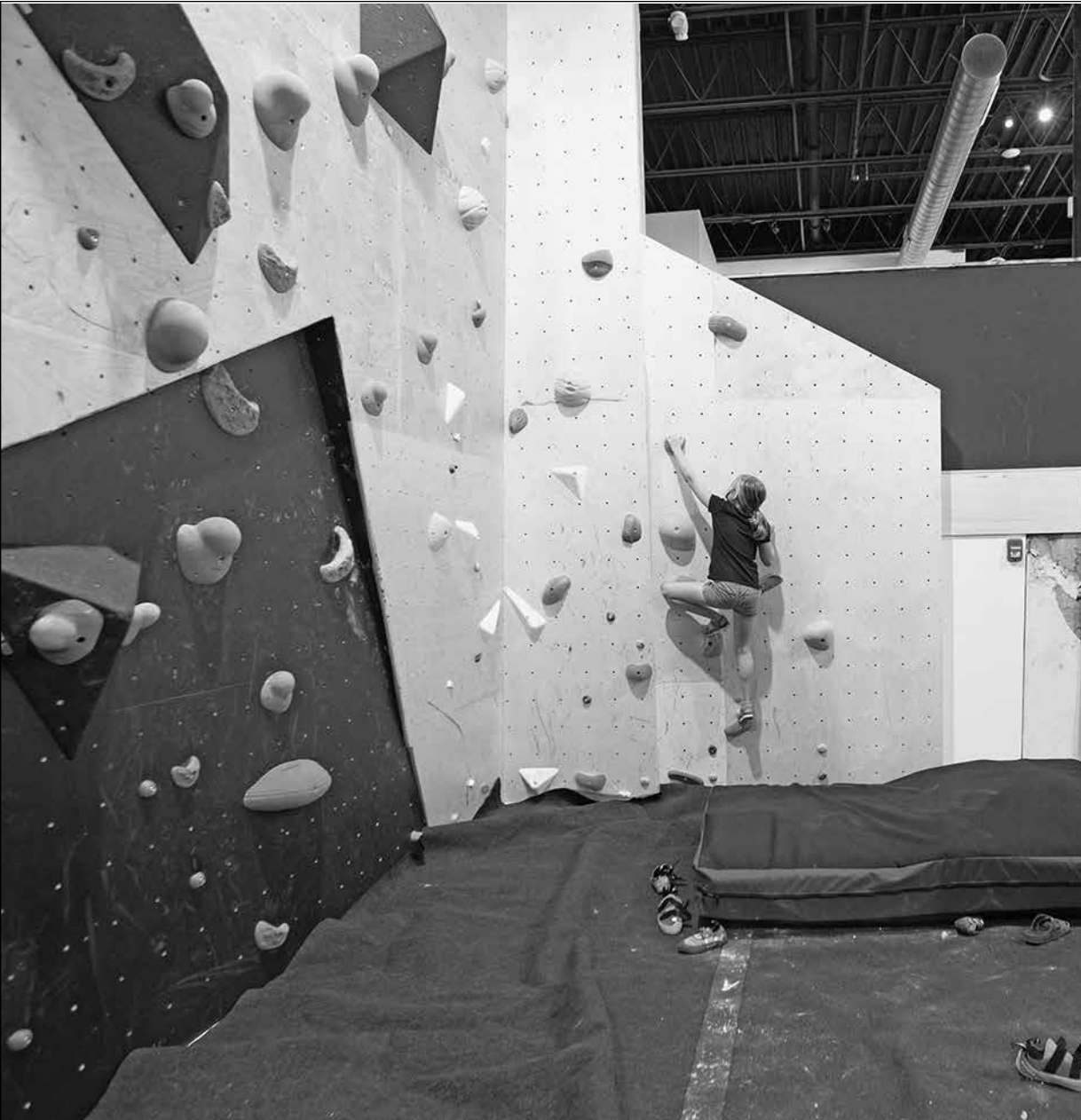
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The Loop Commons offers a climbing wall for people interested in the increasingly popular activity.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Focus on the Family

Looking for indoor fun ideas? Look no further

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**

STAFF WRITER

Just finding a way to keep children busy throughout the holiday season can be a challenge for parents – especially those in rural areas where there aren't always numerous options.

Some of the businesses offering activities for children and caregivers over the holidays:

TraXside Skating

As many children of the 1980s will tell you, there's nothing like spending an afternoon at a roller rink, skating in circles to popular music.

"I just think that it is kind of good old social fun," Tammy Boldt, events manager at TraXside. "It's where you come to hang out with people and meet with friends."

TraXside bears a special trait in that children do not get the WiFi password for the business's internet, which makes them focus on family and friends the entire time they are there.

"It's family fun," Boldt said. "It's something the whole family can do together. You're having fun, and you don't realize you're burning calories while you do it."

TraXside has regular open skate hours from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays, from 5 to 9 p.m. Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. Fees for admission and skate rentals remain the same.

Located at 637 S. Kane Street in Burlington, TraXside is the former Skate Barn. All ages are welcome.

The rink is also available for private rental by calling 262-763-4410.

Climb at the Loop

While some adults remember roller skating from their childhood, others remember climbing – everything from a jungle gym to tree to the occasional rock wall.

The climbing wall at The Loop Commons – 488 Milwaukee Ave., Burlington – offers an indoor bouldering gym for people of all ages and athletic abilities.

As the group's website says, climbing can be for anyone. There are specific routes set on the wall – called "problems" in the bouldering world – that need to be solved in order to climb the wall.

On a first visit to the facility, visitors get a tour and are taught what they need to know to get up the wall and back down again. A day pass for the wall is \$15 with a \$3 shoe rental. Thirty-day monthly memberships are \$60 for an individual, \$80 for two people and \$100 for a family.

The climbing wall is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

Reservations are suggested to guarantee space on the wall but not mandatory. For more information or reserve a spot, call 262-716-0042.

BOWLING • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

teams have a few more bowlers."

Towne and Country Lanes typically sees anywhere from 75 to 100 youth bowlers, said Reimer, who added most participate in either the Saturday morning program or the high school program - not both.

"It is something different for the kids to do besides football, or basketball, or soccer," Riemer said. "Our program is structured so that kids who are in those sports such as football, soccer, basketball, can also work bowling into their schedule."

The youth boom, meanwhile, comes a couple of years after bowling experienced a slight decline in participation.

Cotie Holbeck, who has a well-established bowling career and serves as pro shop operator at Towne and Country, welcomes the rebound in activity.

"Over the last couple of years, bowling is starting to ramp up again," Holbeck said. "There are so many kids that are coming in and are willing and want to get better. They learn and have a good time."

Starting bowlers young, he said, is critical to helping the sport grow in the future.

"When you start them when they are kids, they are going to be lifelong bowlers," he said. "The youth bowling today is the future of bowling right now."

"It is great to see more kids involved."

The recent growth, according to Riemer, reflects an industry trend both locally and nationally.

"Overall, in the industry, they still say that high school bowling is the largest growing sport everywhere," she said.

Locally, she credits parents, who started as youth bowlers at Towne and Country Lanes.

"The kids that are coming into the program are kids of former junior bowlers," she said.

Decades in business

Towne and Country Lanes was established in 1958.

In 1971, Riemer's parents, Merrill and Lorraine bought the business, and continued the tradition of offering bowling to the area.

"We try to treat customers like family. We take care of customers as well as we can," Holbeck said. "We know most of the customers by name."

Along with multiple leagues, and open bowling times, Towne and Country Lanes also offers a venue for birthday and company parties as well as pro shop for people looking to begin the sports or upgrade equipment.

"I offer a wide variety of sales, I also custom fit and drill bowling balls that I order from different warehouses through a distributor that I use,"

Holbeck said. "I do have some accessories - balls, bags and shoes - I sell it all out of here."

Big business

River City Lanes, of Waterford, and Towne and Country Lanes in Burlington will serve as hosts of the 42nd annual Wisconsin State Senior Championship early next year.

The tournament opened Feb. 11, with the last squad held on Sunday, April, 30, according to the United States Bowling Congress.

Riemer reports Towne and Country Lanes previously served as hosts on two other occasions.

"We will be welcoming over 2,000 bowlers to our area, plus spouses that come to visit and travel with them," she said. "Not only is it a great thing for our business, but for the City of Burlington and surrounding areas." The City of Burlington, Waterford, and surrounding areas are going to see an increase in business because of the bowlers coming from all over the state of Wisconsin."

The Wisconsin State Senior Championship, which is still accepting entries, is open to bowlers 55 and older.

Towne and Country Lanes, 264 S. Pine St., Burlington is accessible online at towneandcountrylanes.com/home.html.

For customers looking for open bowling, Riemer suggests calling Towne and Country Lanes ahead of time, since hours vary depending on day.

For more information, call 262-763-7333.

Learn the basics of pickleball

A court sport is sweeping the nation, and it isn't tennis or basketball. According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, 4.8 million people played pickleball in 2021, marking a nearly 15 percent growth in the total number of players from the year prior.

Data from the SFIA suggests pickleball is popular among people of all ages. Total participation among players between ages six and 17 (21 percent), 18 and 34 (29 percent) and 35 and 54 (20 percent) is significant, and players 65 and older also are well represented (18 percent).

As the popularity of pickleball grows, now is a great time to explore the basics of this game that's become a go-to pastime for so many people.

What is pickleball?

USA Pickleball™ notes that pickleball combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong. That game is played with a paddle and a plastic ball with holes and can be played both indoors and outdoors on a badminton-sized court with a slightly modified tennis net. Much like tennis, pickleball can be played in a singles (one-on-one) or doubles (two-on-two) format.

How is pickleball played?

An extensive list of the rules of pickleball can be found at usapickleball.org. A game is typically played to 11 points, and a team must win by two.

Where to play

Pickleball courts in the area include the following:

- East Troy Community Center, 2040 Beulah Ave., Door 7. Call 262-642-4900 for availability;
- Big Foot Recreation District, 401 Devils Lane, Walworth. For more information, call 262-275-2117; and
- Legion Park, 989 Legion Drive, Twin Lakes. For more information, call 262-877-2858.

Tournament games may be played to 15 or 21, and a team must win by two.

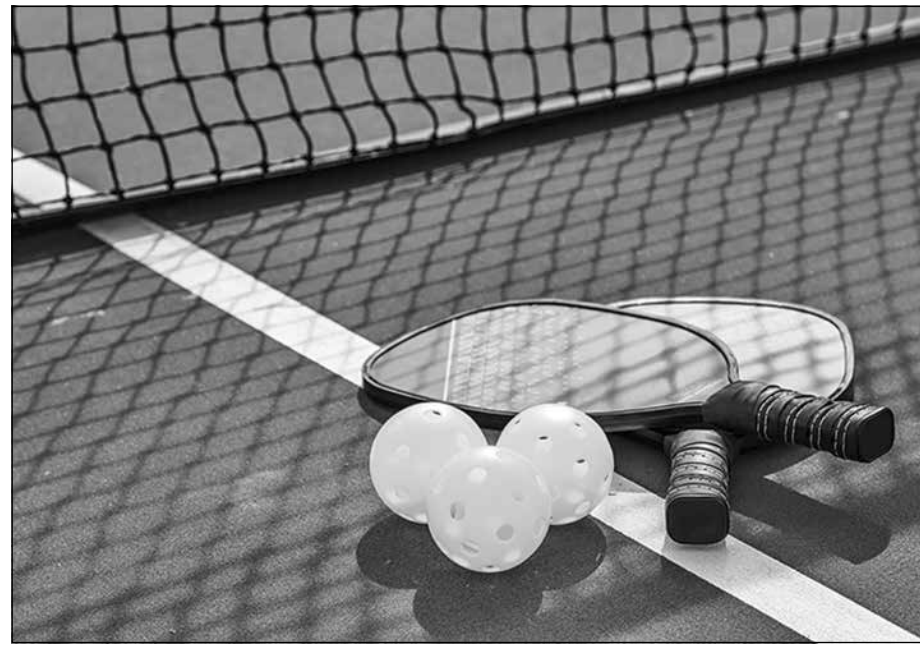
Does pickleball utilize referees?

Recreational games of pickleball can rely on the honor system much like pick-up games of other sports do.

However, USA Pickleball notes that referees and line judges are important components of tournament play. More information about becoming a pickleball referee can be found at usapickleball.org.

How long has pickleball been played?

Despite a recent and meteoric spike in popularity, pickleball has been around



Pickleball has experienced a notable spike in popularity in recent years. More information about the game and how to get involved is available at usapickleball.org.

STOCK PHOTO Focus on the Family

since 1965. The brainchild of three fathers from Bainbridge Island (which is just a brief ferry ride away from Seattle), the game was invented as a means of entertaining bored children. It has since evolved from those roots and become a wildly popular game across both the United States and Canada, and the game has even begun to spread into Europe and Asia.

Why should I play pickleball?

Players enjoy the game of pickleball for a multitude of reasons, including the thrill of competition, the chance to socialize and the opportunity to exercise outside of a gym or home fitness center. But many play the game because they find it fun.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Spring activities for families to enjoy together

Spring is one of the most popular seasons of the year. After several months of chilly temperatures in many regions, spring provides a welcome reprieve from the cold.

Moderate temperatures makes it much more comfortable and inviting to venture outdoors, particularly for families with children who might not adapt to the cold as well as adults. The following are some family-friendly activities that make the most of spring renewal.

Prepare a home garden

Visiting a garden is one thing, creating one at home is another. In addition to planning a vegetable garden to enjoy tasty pickings throughout summer, you can devote some property to flowers that will attract wildlife. Check with a garden center about which flowers and plants attract butterflies and other beneficial insects. Many garden centers sell butterfly and hummingbird mixes to attract wildlife.

Go animal watching

Flowers are not the only thing on display come the spring. Many animals, including birds, are born this time of year. Baby animals are not only adorable, they can be entertaining to watch grow.

Families can spend time viewing the animals that visit their yards or surrounding parks, being careful to keep their distance. Adults may be quite protective of their young, so it's better to watch from the lens of a camera or with binoculars. Always resist the urge to help a baby animal who seems like it was



Family friendly activities abound in the Southern Lakes Area. As the weather warms, get the kids outside for some fresh air.

STOCK PHOTO Focus on the Family

abandoned. The parent may be a short distance away gathering food or trying to avoid drawing attention to the young to deter predators.

Visit botanic gardens

If there's a botanical garden nearby, a visit in spring is a great time to soak in the beauty of nature. That's because an abundance of flowers bloom during the spring, meaning a garden will be in peak form. Visitors can meander through rows of rose bushes or tour the labyrinth

of trimmed hedges. Beautiful, flowering cherry trees, with their delicate pink or white petals, also are sights to behold in spring.

Get out on the water

A bright, warm day is an ideal time to enjoy the open water. Spring is a season when many marinas reopen and avid boaters put their vessels back into the water. You also can venture into streams or lakes aboard kayaks or canoes, getting exercise and seeing the scenery in the

process. Bring a fishing pole along and cast it into the water for a few hours of recreation.

Make wind chimes

Enhance the garden or decor around the home by making wind chimes or other percussion items that can create beautiful music when spring breezes blow. Commercially available kits are sold, but wind chimes also can be made from items like bamboo or even strung shells.

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