

In Touch with Extension

Winter Forest Safety

By Sarah Havens, Natural Resources Specialist

The Missouri woods are beautiful during the winter. The peaceful beauty and brisk temperatures can be rejuvenating. If there is snow on the ground, you may even catch a glimpse of which wildlife are active by looking for tracks. However, it is important to take care when enjoying Missouri's wood any time of year.

This past year we saw some extreme weather events that potentially may have caused damage to trees in your area. Wind and ice can break limbs and tops of trees and leave those broken pieces hanging in the trees. This time of year ice and snow can also add weight to limbs and branches. Look up regularly as you walk along to make sure that you are not walking or stopping under dangling or broken limbs. Tree health issues can also raise concern about the stability of a tree. Emerald Ash Borer has killed many of our ash trees in the forest and they have been known to break at unusual places. If you notice any structurally unsound branches or dead trees as you walk along, flag that area to remind you to use caution or avoid the area until they fall.

Being safe in the woods should also include the clothes you wear and the personal protective equipment that you use. Sturdy shoes are important all times of year to help in rocky or muddy conditions. Waterproof boots are useful in winter when wet feet are even more uncomfortable. Dressing in layers can help with the unpredictable temperatures we sometimes see in Missouri. A hard hat is also a good piece of equipment when walking or working in the woods. If you are working in the woods on clearing brush or cutting, eye protection is also important.

Another consideration are ticks! Even in winter, ticks have been found to be active. They do slow down on the colder days but they will be quite active on our warmer winter days. Make sure you are tick savvy year round. This includes wearing long pants tucked into your socks or taped to your boots. You should also tuck your shirt into your pants. Permethrin-treated clothing is another good deterrent of ticks. You should always do a tick check after time in the woods. I have found them even in January.

Hydration is also important even in the winter time. Make sure you carry water and snacks when spending the day in the woods. Woods work and walking in the woods can be a workout. It also a good practice to carry your cell phone and to let someone know where you are going to be and what time you expect to be back.

It is important to be safe in the woods all year round and that means being prepared for whatever activity you are doing in the woods. Make sure you stay safe so you can enjoy all the seasons in the woods!



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Make Your Calories Count

By Jean Day, Nutrition Program Associate

Everyone has a calorie budget – what is yours? The energy provided by food is measured in calories. *Essential* calories meet our nutrient needs, *extra* calories – don't!

Essential calories are the minimum your body must have to meet your nutrient needs. Focus on choices from the MyPlate food groups. Your best nutrient choices are foods with the least amount of fat, and no added sugar. Choosing nutrient-dense foods builds your health.

Extra calories are *extras*. These are the calories you have left in a healthy eating plan *after* you eat nutrient-dense foods to get the essential calories for your body's needs. Extra calories can be used on luxuries – foods with added sugar, foods higher in fat, alcohol (in moderation,) or more foods from one of the 5 food groups. Extras provide “empty calories,” with few or no nutrients for your body.

Plan a calorie budget for yourself and stay within that budget. Choose the most value for your calories. Choose your extras *after* your essentials.

Where do we get our extra calories? Most solid fats and all added sugar calories are extra!

Fats:

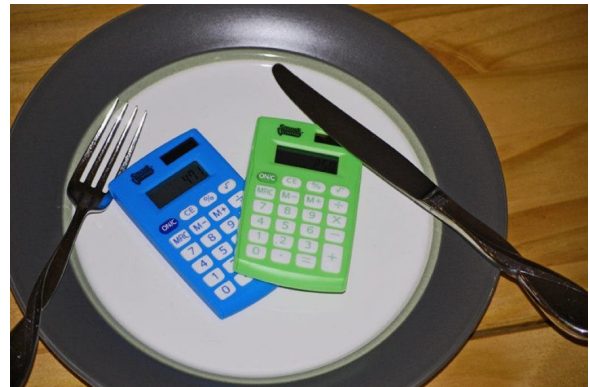
- Higher-fat forms of foods
- Higher-fat meats
- Whole milk

Added sugars:

- Foods and other products with sugars added during processing and preparation
- Sweetened beverages
- Sweetened bakery products

Balance *your* calorie budget:

- Focus on MyPlate food groups to get your nutrients
- Use lower-calorie forms of foods & drinks
- Enjoy your food but eat less
- Limit solid fats and added sugars
- Choose empty calorie foods & drinks less often



How many extra calories can I eat? Most extra calorie allowances are very small, often 100 to 300 calories. This number depends on your age, gender, and activity level.

How do I know my individual calorie budget? Visit MyPlate.gov and find out!

Painting Easier Exercise: Get Involved

By Rachel Buenemann MS, RD, Nutrition Specialist

Painting playgrounds throughout town encourage everyone to be playfully active.

It is recommended that adults and youth alike participate in daily physical activity; at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5-days a week for adults and at least 60 minutes of activity each day for youth. Achieving these national goals is made easier with the use of environmental cues such as painted playgrounds. Painted playgrounds are the use of paint or 2-D decorations to inspire movement in our parks, shopping centers, sidewalks, and community spaces. Painted playgrounds were first implemented in the late 1990s by sports science researcher Gareth Stratton, at an elementary school in Liverpool England. Stratton decorated the school's asphalt recess lot with a set of fun, brightly colored designs — including a castle, pirate ship, dragon, hopscotch board, and maze. With the addition of these decorations, Stratton believed youth at the school increased their activity.

On-going research has shown that painted playgrounds work to increase movement. Youth evaluated for physical activity level before and after a painted playground was added to community spaces increased their exertion. A 35% increase in energy exertion is seen (Stratton, 2002), as well as a 10-minute increase in the duration of active play (Stratton, 2000).

Joining in more active movement regularly, results in increased energy for people of all ages. Participating in even moderate-intensity exercise, such as a brisk walk, or dancing benefits brain health. Adults experience reduced anxiety when physically active, and youth benefit from improved thinking or cognition. Other benefits of increased activity include: weight management, reducing disease, strengthening your bones and muscles, and improving your ability to do everyday activities.

Painted playgrounds are a low-cost solution to building healthy communities. The Missouri Department of Health and Human Services offers access to their collection of painting stencils at no cost. Also, asphalt paint usually costs \$15.00 or less.

MU Extension's Youth and Family department is encouraging community businesses, community spaces, and parks to adopt a painted playground in their paved space. Playground designs include mazes, a pirate treasure map, a crocodile hop-scotch, and many more. The stencils are available to view at <https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/teamnutrition/playgroundstencils.php> Cities such as Cincinnati Ohio have painted shoe prints and hand prints for yoga poses and piano keyboards along walking trails to engage residents in activity.

It doesn't require much to increase physical activity; just a few more steps each day. But sometimes we want to do more than walk. We want to skip, hop, and explore fun cues for physical activity.

Contact Rachel Buenemann, the Nutrition and Health Specialist of the Phelps County Extension Center to receive assistance adopting a painted playground to your paved spaces. Funding assistance is available to assist with the purchase of paint if requested. Phone number 573-458-6256, rachelbuenemann@missouri.edu.



Tigers United: Mascots set aside rivalries to help save relatives in the wild

Missouri families and educators! Truman has something important to share with you. As any loyal fan knows, Mizzou's mascot, Truman, is a Bengal tiger. Sadly, the number of tigers in the wild has declined sharply over the last century.

Today, there are fewer than 4,000 tigers left worldwide!

To help conservationists reverse this tragic trend, Truman has teamed up with tiger mascots at fellow land-grant universities: The Tiger at Clemson, Aubie at Auburn and Mike at Louisiana State. The Tigers United University Consortium, started by Clemson University, will help spread awareness about the plight of the wild tiger.

One important step is learning about Truman's magnificent relatives and the global efforts to save them. The [Team Up for Tigers program](https://www.clemson.edu/tigers-always/consortium/documents/team-up-for-tigers-2020_.pdf) is a great place to start. https://www.clemson.edu/tigers-always/consortium/documents/team-up-for-tigers-2020_.pdf

Learn more about the Tigers United University Consortium at www.tigersunited.org.

Truman encourages educators of Missouri 4-H'ers and youths everywhere to check out Missouri 4-H's [Global Education resources](https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-4-h/4-h-projects-opportunities/4-h-projects/global-education). <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-4-h/4-h-projects-opportunities/4-h-projects/global-education>



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