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## OLDER AND WISER: Stay connected with summer activities

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file photo Paul McGrath, North Shore News

Getting out and about is good for your physical and mental health. Regular physical exercise improves your balance, reduces falls, helps you stay independent longer and helps prevent disease, stroke, osteoporosis and Type 2 diabetes. It also increases your quality of life. Getting mental exercise increases your ability to stay connected to community and helps you stay independent.

A fun way to get some exercise and maybe stimulate your brain is by walking about and enjoying our North Shore community. Here are a few suggestions for the summer – and most are free or by a small donation.

Last week I went on a storied walk sponsored by North Vancouver Museum and Archives which was free and fun. It was not too strenuous, only a little trip around the Pipe Shop and out onto the pier all the while regaled by two young women (shipyard pals Sal and Su) who act and sing about the history of the Shipyards including the inclusion of women as workers during the war years. Free drop-in walks are offered Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. – meet at Lonsdale Avenue and Victory Ship Way.

Want to get into the woods and away from the hubbub? Try the other walk sponsored by the NVMA. In the old forest in Lynn Canyon Park, outdoor enthusiasts Max and Molly will entertain you with tales of North Shore mountaineering adventures. Free drop-in walks are offered Wednesday and Thursdays at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. – meet across from the Lynn Canyon Café.

Maybe you might want something a little more cerebral – try the Gordon Smith Gallery which is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon until 5 p.m. The Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art, on Lonsdale Avenue, opened its doors in 2012 to provide art enrichment opportunities for children and to ignite community engagement through exceptional Canadian Art curation and education. A donation of \$5 is suggested. After the gallery you could walk a bit of the Green Necklace which passes right outside the gallery doors, heading west until you get your exercise quotient in.

Also on the “cerebral” bucket list is the Polygon Gallery, which is right at the bottom of Lonsdale. Polygon is a public art gallery with a focus on photography and media based art exhibits. A donation of \$5 is suggested. After viewing the art, try walking along the pathway past the Quay and SeaBus area to Waterfront Park and along the Spirit Trail, soon to be extended west through the Mosquito Creek Marina to link up with Harbourside Park.

In West Vancouver try walking the sea wall where you can stop off and look at the exhibition in the Ferry Building Gallery. The gallery is open most days 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.

In the summer in West Vancouver, a must-see is the Harmony Arts Festival. This year it will be held on Aug. 3 to 12. The festival offers free outdoor entertainment, booths and tables. A walk along the Seawalk or along Ambleside Beach will get you to the festival and also provide some exercise.

A nice, easy, pleasant walk in the woods with no distractions except for possible bird sightings can be found at the Maplewood Mud Flats.

“Managed by the Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia, Maplewood Flats Conservation Area is a popular bird watching park. Located just east of the Second Narrows Bridge, off old Dollarton Highway, there are more than 200 species of birds spotted in the park annually.”

Well now that I've written this I think I'll take my own advice and get out and about – for exercise and fun, remembering, of course, to bring my hat, sunscreen and water.

*Margaret Coates is the co-ordinator of Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society. She has lived on the North Shore for 48 years and has worked for and with seniors for 21 of those years. Ideas for future columns are welcome Email: [lions\\_view@telus.net](mailto:lions_view@telus.net).*

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