

# renaissance

The Retired Teachers of Ontario Magazine

Summer 2019



## summer on the go

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Canoeing  
across Canada

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Summer camp  
for grown-ups

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The great  
Canadian  
road trip

# Renaissance summer fitness program

Our top-to-toe outdoor workout builds strength and improves balance.

by **Ylva Van Buren**

**Erin Billowits**, the founder of Vintage Fitness ([vintagefitness.ca](http://vintagefitness.ca)), a personal-training company focused on energizing the lives of people aged 50-plus, created this easy workout to do in the great outdoors. All you need is a resistance band and a piece of chalk, along with a spot with trees, a staircase and a paved sidewalk. Wear supportive footwear and comfortable clothing, stay hydrated and get going! Check with your doctor before starting this or any fitness program.

## Stair Climb

(leg muscles, heart and balance)

Stand facing a staircase. Raise right foot to first step, then follow with left. Lower right foot, lower left. Repeat for 1 minute. Change sides and repeat, leading with your left. Hold on to the railing for balance or pump with arms.

**Challenge yourself:** Increase the speed or, if your balance is good, climb the entire staircase, return to the bottom and repeat for 1–2 minutes in total.



## Tree Push-up

(chest and core)

Stand about 2 feet away from a tree. Place palms on tree at shoulder height. Bend elbows and lower yourself toward tree. Pause for a few seconds, then straighten arms. Each rep should take 4–6 seconds. Inhale as you move toward the tree and exhale as you push away. Keep movement controlled with back straight and shoulders relaxed. Repeat 10–15 times.

**Challenge yourself:** Stand farther away from the tree (this will create more resistance) and slow down the push-up motion.



If you need motivation to get more active this summer, look no further than 76-year-old Dee Simpson. “Keeping active is all about doing the things I love,” she says, “and being able to keep doing them.”

An adventure traveller, Simpson has cycled in Macedonia, hiked and biked in Japan and trekked across mountains in Bhutan. And that’s just in the last few years! She’s also a personal trainer at Vintage Fitness (she was certified about 10 years ago following a career as a documentary filmmaker) and supports other people’s fitness goals.

Simpson meets her 15 clients every week; the youngest is 38 and the oldest is 94. “I’m a huge goal-oriented person,” she says. “I help my clients set fitness goals, and I’m there to give them accountability, too.”



# Fun? You Bet!

## Pickleball

Pickleball combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis — and it's a fantastic sport for an older person, says Marcel Latouche at Pickleball Canada and an ex-ranked tennis player. The game is easy to learn, doesn't require the agility of tennis and "suits players like myself, with bad knees and a bad shoulder who need a game that is easy on the body and joints," says Latouche. "At my club, we play from one until four, then retire to the pub." Two or four players use paddles to hit a ball over a net. The sport was developed when a man was playing ball with his dog, Pickles. Visit [pickleballcanada.ca](http://pickleballcanada.ca) to find out where to play in your province.

## Hooping

Remember the hula hoop craze? Now think hooping for fitness! Jo Anne Tudor of Tudor Therapeutics and Seminars teaches beginners to hoop around their hand or arm; once they get a feel for it, she shows them how to body hoop. "Hooping helps find movement in the ribs, hips, neck and arms, all areas that can get bound up by a sedentary lifestyle." The activity helps improve cardio fitness, range of motion and brain function. "Plus, we associate hula hooping with childhood play, so it's fun," says Tudor. Visit [tudortherapeuticsandseminars.com](http://tudortherapeuticsandseminars.com) for more information.

## Round Dancing

Round dancing is a fun form of choreographed ballroom dancing. Couples follow the instructions of a "cuer" to progress in a circular, counter-clockwise pattern around the dance floor. Round dancing provides cardiovascular, co-ordination, balance and memory benefits, and it improves your social life, too. Contact the Canadian Square & Round Dance Society at [csrds.ca](http://csrds.ca) to find a club near you.



## Walk the Line (balance and brain health)

Use chalk to draw a straight three-metre-long line on a sidewalk. If necessary, choose an area with a fence or wall you can use for balance. Start at one end and, placing one foot in front of the other, heel to toe, walk the line. Turn around and repeat. Continue for 1–2 minutes.

**Challenge yourself:** Walk more slowly and lift your knees waist high as you take each step.



## Row with a Band (upper body)

Loop a resistance band around a tree (or a bench) and hold each end with one hand. Breathe out slowly and pull both elbows back until hands are in line with hips. Keep shoulders relaxed and release to starting position. Repeat 10–15 times. Each rep should take 4–6 seconds.

**Challenge yourself:** Shorten the band on each side to increase the tension. Slow down the rowing motion.



## Tree Squat (upper legs and balance)

Stand with your back to a tree, feet hip-distance apart. Bend knees to a 90-degree angle, using the tree for support. Hold for 10–15 seconds. Stand up and pause. Repeat 4–6 times.

**Challenge yourself:** Hold the position for 30 seconds. ■

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology recommends that people over 65 get 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise each week. It's still beneficial if you do it in 10-minute sessions, says Patty Clarke, the national executive director of Active Aging Canada. A fitness program should include both cardiovascular activities and strength training.