

# Hit the trails this spring...

## Keeping fit

with  
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Halton Hills offers a wide range of trail experiences to explore within minutes from your front door.

You may be thinking what kind of hillbilly would run on trails and get wet, dirty, potentially lost and bug bitten? I found that shifting my running experience from the pavement to the trails has improved my running time and liberated my mind in the process and it can do the same for you.

The trails keep my run interesting as the scenery constantly changes with every stride and every turn demanding me to stay present in the moment. This provides a much more meditative experience than clocking kilometres on the pavement.

No more buildings, predictable stop lights, endless houses or carbon monoxide-spewing vehicles to run alongside.

Trail running is more forgiving on your body than pavement, concrete or any other hard surface. Folks can transmit as much as four times their body weight with every pounding step on the pavement, potentially causing stress fractures on your bones from the energy being transmitted from the pavement back up into your legs.

If you have been a longtime roadrunner you may appreciate how forgiving the trails can be on your joints and back. On the trails the earth or bark provides shock absorption, which is much easier on your joints, reducing the likelihood of an injury.

As your body adapts to the constantly changing surface and physical topography of the trail, your stride will become more explosive as your muscles and core are strengthened. When you take it back onto the road you will feel how much easier it is and how much more you are getting out of each stride.

In addition to better air quality, trail running

burns way more calories because you have to lift your feet over roots and rocks, duck under branches, navigate through rivers and climb steep hills. This also improves your balance, agility and co-ordination. Trail running works your leg muscles and ankle joints harder than roads or treadmills ever will.

Try a trail run. Maybe your doctor is the only one who knows your health and would be pleased you are making the effort and you should too! In today's world just being able to run any distance deserves a medal. Heck, just being active is a huge victory in our society.

Think about it; how many people at your workplace or in the stores you shop at could actually run to catch a bus or cab if they needed to? Maybe a more important question is how many can set a good example for, encourage or even keep up, with their kids?

Beyond physical health, trail running provides a psychological benefit as well. When I am trail running, I feel 100 per cent-focused and at peace with my life, environment and the entire universe.

Trail running strengthens your connection to the big picture. It draws you back to your primal existence and reminds you that when that when all our toys and gadgets are taken away, all that remains is you, the beating of your heart, the sound of your breath, and the pulsing of the planet.

If you have never run trails before, hike out your potential trail run first to make yourself familiar with the trail and look for something that isn't too rocky

