Water sports quickly burn calories

By Molly Hucklebridge

The warm summer air and refreshing water of Lake Tahoe beckon you to play. Did you know that you could burn calories faster and tone up quicker in the water than in an air-conditioned gym?

Consider these outdoor water activities for fun and healthy fitness adventures.

Water calisthenics: Burn more calories faster

Swimming and water aerobics are forms of resistance training. You don’t have to be an experienced swimmer to see fitness results. Water aerobics is ideal for any age or fitness ability. Water’s buoyancy helps protect your knees and joints. Another perk: The American Exercise Association (AEA) suggests exercise in water burns more calories than walking on land at a moderate pace.

For a great underwater workout, try scissor kicks, jogging in place, or hopping from side to side.

Standup paddleboarding

You may not know what it’s called, but you have definitely seen it in action. Standup paddleboarding is a new, popular water sport for calmer waters. It takes some balance and coordination, but you may surprise yourself how laid back it can be. On the South Shore, rentals are available at Kayak Tahoe, South Tahoe Standup Paddle, and SUP Tahoe. Once you’ve fine-tuned your skills, try standup paddle yoga with Lake Tahoe Yoga, or glide into the Wednesday Night SUP Races, which claim to be “America’s best standup paddleboard race.” Races

launch every Wednesday in the summer from El Dorado Beach in South Lake Tahoe.

Kayak or canoe on the lake

One of the most exciting ways to experience the lake and test your fitness is simply to paddle. Kayaking and canoeing engage your core and, depending on your fitness level and exertion, can get your heart pumping. Boats can be launched on most public shorelines, and kayak rental options are abundant. Always wear a personal flotation device, and check ahead for inclement weather.

For the ambitious water chasers, Emerald Bay State Park's boat-in campground, only accessible by boat or on foot, is an overnight option. Extreme adventure seekers should consider the 72-mile Lake Tahoe Water Trail – the lake's answer to the Tahoe Rim Trail. Break it up into smaller trips or camp on public beaches and tackle the whole lake. Safety note: Conditions can be rough and trips should be planned with caution. For maps and information, visit laketahoewatertrail.org and make State Park reservations at reserveamerica.com.

A workout for the brain

While splashing around or engaging in a water fight is fun for the kids, it also plays an important role in their development. Water play is a sensory experience that can help children with motor skills, stimulate language skills, increase social skills, and can reinforce science and mathematical concepts.

Beyond the lake

In late spring, the snowmelt hits just the right flow on the East Fork of the Carson River. Rafters and kayakers jump on this opportunity to paddle down a designated Wild and Scenic River stretch through snow-covered mountains in the Carson-

Iceberg Wilderness. Rafting outfitters offer one- or two-day trips, which include family friendly rapids, breathtaking scenery, and an option to soak in the area’s hot springs.

For a more leisurely float, paddle a 5-mile stretch down the Truckee River. Self-guided options start in Tahoe City.

Molly Hucklebridge is the communications specialist for Barton Health.