



# Fitness Facts

## Helping Americans Live A Healthier Lifestyle

(NAPSA)—Inactivity is blamed for everything from child obesity to rising health care costs. To help reverse this trend, a variety of companies and organizations is encouraging people to spend time active and outdoors.

And people may be getting the message. According to a recent study by the Boulder, Colo.-based Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF)—a nonprofit founded to encourage healthier lifestyles through outdoor recreation—participation in outdoor activities is growing.

“Two million more Americans got active in the outdoors in 2005 than they did in 2004,” says the OIF’s Michelle Barnes, whose foundation has a searchable database of more than 100 outreach programs working to get America active.

The study found that participation increased across the 22 outdoor activities monitored, from 159 million (Americans age 16 and older) in 2004 to 161.6 million in 2005, and that in 2005, one in four Americans age 16 and older (59.5 million) took a vacation specifically to participate in an outdoor activity. But there’s still room for improvement.

While participation increased, total outings decreased by 11 percent, from 8.3 billion to 7.3 billion.

Several companies are taking steps to encourage outdoor outings, be it hiking, biking or camping. One example is Richmond, Calif.-based Mountain Hardware, which recently launched the Mission Project to promote outdoor activity. By setting up a blog ([blog.mountainhardware.com](http://blog.mountainhardware.com)) and



**Now there’s even more reasons to get outdoors and get healthier. One company is awarding prizes for outdoor accomplishments.**

awarding prizes for posting tales and photos of adventures, the company helps motivate people to set goals for and achieve outdoor accomplishment.

“We just want to encourage more people to get outdoors,” says Paige Boucher of Mountain Hardware.

As part of the program, people set a goal involving outdoor recreation, take along and test Mountain Hardware gear and then tell fellow adventurers about it on the Mission Project blog.

The company will award prizes to the top submissions, including the Grand Prize of a guided trip up Mt. Rainier with renowned mountain climber Peter Whittaker and a \$2,000 Mountain Hardware shopping spree.

“Our company got founded through a genuine love of the outdoors, and we want to encourage others to do the same,” says Boucher. “It’s just one way we can help people try to get healthier.”