

Health Becomes a Festival

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A woman striking a yoga pose. Many parks will host weekend sessions.

Moscow's inaugural festival aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle among the city's residents is to take place in Park Krasnaya Presnya over the weekend of May 18 and 19.

The festival "Zdorovaya Moskva" has been in the pipeline for many years, but it is only this year that the opportunity to implement plans has come about, having taken some time to find an appropriate location and secure governmental support.

The festival is free for participants and will promote healthy eating, sport, dance and some methods of relaxation, under the banner of three thematic areas: "Move" (sport), "Creative" (workshops, educational games) and "Try" (food).

Its target audience is both children and adults with a variety of interests.

"There is a different sport for every age. Currently, one work out is very popular among the young people — gymnastics with the horizontal bar. Those who are older tend to be

interested in yoga, Chi Kung, Pilates," said festival director Igor Donchenko.

A further focus will be healthy eating, through which he hopes attendees will learn how to cook healthy meals on a small budget.

"The School of Healthy and Delicious Food" will be run by some Russian television cooks and Moscow restaurant chefs.

"Guests of the festival will learn about the different areas of healthy cooking: vegetarianism and raw food, separate nutrition, slow food and others," he stated, going on to describe the event as "not a food court and a not picnic!"

The Museum of Science is also involved, holding a workshop entitled 'Experimentanium' which will entertain children through engaging them in scientific experiments. Every two hours, there will be a display of giant bubbles.

Despite it lasting only two days, he wants the festival's message to carry far beyond the time period which it spans.

"The greatest contribution is undoubtedly the fact that thousands of citizens will attend the festival...it will be held for the benefit of all the people," he claimed.

"The concern is not only regarding a physical sense of health, but also with the spiritual," he continued, hoping that the overall message from the festival will seep into the mentalities of city residents.

He suggested that he was even contemplating the possibility of holding a winter festival in subsequent years, "just to show people that they can take care of their health even in the cold season."

However, he remains conscious of the fact that Moscow is not currently included in the World Health Organization (WHO)'s network of "Healthy Cities", which links more than 90 cities and towns through their "caring and supportive environments," "healthy living," and "healthy urban design." Some progressive steps have, however, been made.

Last October, the creation of a Union of Tobacco-free Cities in the Russian Federation, an organization which will serve as a forum to discuss tobacco control initiatives, was announced by the World Health Organization and the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee. One of the highest risk factors among adult males in the country is tobacco use, according to the WHO.

The organization has also aired their support for the 'Decade of Safe Driving' campaign, which kicked off in 2011. This March, the WHO announced a joint effort to ensure a 25 percent reduction in traffic accident deaths through a stronger focus on speeding, seat-belt wearing and "improved infrastructure" too.

"If a person starts to think about himself, he begins work on it," he stated. "We plan to make the festival a regular, in order to fix the habits of the Muscovites and make our city a healthier place." he mused. "One of the steps is to develop the habit of taking care of yourself."

Healthy Moscow" will be held May 18–19 in Park Krasnaya Presnya, 5 Mantulinskaya Ulitsa, Metro Ulitsa 1905 Goda.

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