



INTO THE WOODS

Morristown resident Betty Plunkett, 51, says she's a late bloomer when it comes to sports, because as a child there were no sports for girls, just ballet lessons. It wasn't until college that she took up running, and then added cycling and swimming to compete in triathlons.

But her favorite sport, and the one that's been a constant in her life since 1988, is hiking. Plunkett had recently moved to New Jersey and was looking for a way to get to know the area, so she went on a hike with Adventures for Women, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting personal growth for women through wilderness challenges. She liked it so much that she became a guide and eventually the director. "I've met more types of people doing this than I would at any road race or cycling event," Plunkett says. "It's really broadened my experience of connecting with different people."

A sales manager for IBM and single mother of two boys, ages 7 and 12, Plunkett says hiking fits her busy life because it's so easy to throw on a pair of shoes and go. She can hike with a group, on business trips, with her boys or alone. "I find going out into the woods gives me the ability to shut out the noise that goes on in my mind and just breathe in the air and experience the world."

She maintains her fitness with weight training, swimming and a spin class, adding hiking, biking and kayaking for fun. "I like being healthy," says Plunkett. "That's probably the biggest motivator there is. I like not putting on weight and feeling strong. And I like being able to keep up with my children."

Active vacations are always part of Plunkett's summers. This year, she'll spend a week in the Adirondacks with Adventures for Women and explore the Pine Barrens with her sons.