



NATURE and MENTAL HEALTH

Benefits

Spending time in or focusing on aspects of nature is associated with:

- decreased stress and anxiety (including lower cortisol levels and heart rate)
- reduced impact of stressful events
- increased relaxation
- feeling more refreshed
- restoration of attention and memory
- decreases in symptoms of depression
- increased positive emotion (eg. happiness, "elevation", life satisfaction)
- feeling connected to others and life as a whole
- increased creativity

Tips and Suggestions

- Find/make note of green spaces nearby. Set a reminder to spend time there regularly
- Move some of your usual indoor activities outdoors (eg. reading)
- Head outside or to a window during a break or to eat lunch
- Use "transition times" in your day to take in the natural environment as you walk between buildings, appointments, meetings etc. Use all of your senses!
- If you're indoors, let in natural light and fresh air; add potted plants to your space; display art or watch a video portraying nature. Some studies show that photos and videos of natural settings can increase positive emotion, and decrease negative emotion and stress.
- Look for seasonal outdoor activities to do in your area; you can combine it with movement or connecting with others for added wellness benefits! For example:
 - hiking (check out AllTrails for lists of nearby trails)
 - biking (see TrailForks for lists of nearby trails)
 - take a "free form" wandering stroll
 - join local groups, events, recreational sports that involve getting outside
 - find "blue spaces" to swim, kayak, float etc.
 - look for winter hiking/skiing trails and skating rinks in your area
 - go camping and have a picnic
 - nurture a garden, plant, tree etc.
 - watch a sunrise or sunset; go stargazing or look for opportunities to see the Northern Lights

Further Reading



How Nature Makes You Kinder, Happier and More Creative-J. Stuttie, Greater Good Science Centre

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_nature_makes_you_kinder_happier_more_creative

Green Therapy-MindYourMind.com

<https://mindyourmind.ca/wellness/green-therapy>

