

Nature Heals

BENEFITS OF TIME SPENT IN NATURE

Time spent outdoors helps the body recover from the stressors of day-to-day events of an indoor life.

Mental	Physical	Societal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restores ability to concentrate Encourages creative thinking Decreases stress hormones Improves sleep quality Helps emotional control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calms heart rate & reduces blood pressure Restores metabolic activity & stabilizes blood sugars Improves immune system Increases vitamin D production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages empathy Increases feelings of connection with living things Promotes environmentally-friendly behaviors

Interactions with nature are especially beneficial for children and those struggling with mental & emotional difficulties (including people living with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, learning or mental disabilities, autism, depression, anxiety, & ADHA).

ENGAGE THE SENSES

The more senses that you can activate while spending time outdoors, the more beneficial the experience will be to your well-being. Allow yourself to experience nature on multiple levels.

- Sight
- Sound
- Smell
- Touch
- Taste

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

These recommendations suggest a minimum amount of time in nature to receive the restorative benefits. For best results, let your mind wander during outdoor times and incorporate moderate-intensity physical activities like walking briskly, biking casually, or gardening.

- 30 minutes per day in an outdoor space (i.e. backyard, neighborhood) 3x per week, OR
- 2 hours per week (total) in an area with limited man-made distractions (i.e., local park), AND
- 1 day per month in more immersive natural areas (i.e. state park) OR
- 3 days per year fully immersed in an outdoor activity (i.e., hiking or camping)

LEARN MORE WITH THESE RESOURCES

PRO-TIP: Google "site:edu Nature Therapy" (or site:gov) for research-based advice

- ❖ **Nature and Us (University of Minnesota)**
<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>
- ❖ **MN Landscape Arboretum** <https://www.arboretum.umn.edu/nbt/about.aspx>
- ❖ **Universal Design (University of CA)** https://ucanr.edu/sites/livewellinthegarden/Universal_Design/
- ❖ **Ecopsychology: How Immersion in Nature Benefits Your Health**
<https://e360.yale.edu/features/ecopsychology-how-immersion-in-nature-benefits-your-health>

CLASS NOTES

APPLYING THE KNOWLEDGE

What are the natural spaces available to you? (backyard, walkway, park)

What things can you do to increase your contact with the natural world?

How will you make a space in your life for nature?