

# SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS POSITIVELY IMPACTS OUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH



## HEALING POWER OF NATURE



Stress reduction is one of the key mechanisms through which nature can impact health.

### → Environments Increase or Reduce Stress



What you see, hear and experience at any moment can change your mood.

The stress of an unpleasant environment can cause you to feel anxious, sad or helpless. This can elevate your blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension, while suppressing your immune system. Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings.

### → Take Breaks Outdoors: Reduce Burnout



Job burnout involves a sense of not having control over your work and a reduced

feeling of accomplishment. If ignored, you may experience mental and physical consequences, such as insomnia, irritability, excessive stress and high blood pressure.

**Quick Tip!** Take time for breaks each day. Encourage walking meetings and enjoy lunch outdoors.



Greenery isn't just an air-freshener that's pleasant to look at, it can significantly boost your well-being, reduce stress, enhance innovative potential, improve focus, and foster a sense of connection to each other and our environment.

### Nature Restores

**Reduces stress and anxiety.** When under stress, our bodies release hormones like adrenaline, causing our hearts to beat faster and breathing to become more rapid. Nature can reduce these stress effects, helping you feel calm and balanced.

**Physical effects.** Time in nature contributes to your physical well-being by reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and the production of stress hormones.

### Increase Time Outdoors

**Combine workouts with nature.** Going for a walk or run outdoors can be refreshing. Also, try bodyweight activities or yoga, while getting a healthy dose of vitamin D.

**Room with a view.** Increase natural light, add plants to your office or home, change your desktop background and play nature sounds to help bring the relaxing outdoors, inside.

**Take hobbies outdoors.** Try photography, art or craft projects, planting a vegetable garden, and hiking.

**Be a kid again!** Outdoor scavenger hunts, sidewalk chalk, and even board games are healthy ways to get fresh air.

**Quick Tip!** Try something new! Going to a new park or trying a new activity sparks creativity and promotes a sense of accomplishment.

### So how much is enough?

Many studies are attempting to determine the answer to this valuable question. Recent studies suggest 20-30 minute sessions may help support a drop in stress hormones. Don't forget sunscreen and sunglasses!

Source: [Mayo Clinic](http://Mayo Clinic), [naturesacred.org](http://naturesacred.org), [Harvard Business Law](http://Harvard Business Law)



Contact your Health & Wellness Center for more information and to discuss your individual habits today!

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