

# Get Outside

Research suggests that spending time outdoors enhances not only a connection to nature, but decreases stress, promotes psychological and physical health, and improves overall well-being.

Here are some additional benefits:

- **Increased Vitamin D.** Your body needs sunlight to function properly. Vitamin D is important for your bones, blood cells, and immune system. It also helps your body absorb minerals, like calcium and phosphorus. In the summer, 5 to 15 minutes, 2 to 3 times a week of sunlight is sufficient on average. In the winter, you will likely need a little more.
- **Better immunity.** In addition to Vitamin D, many plants put substances into the air that boost immune function. Sunlight also energizes T Cells, which are special cells in your immune system that help fight infection.
- **Improved sleep.** The outdoors can help set your sleep/wake cycle. Cells in your eyes need natural light to get your body's internal clock properly working.
- **Lower blood pressure, decreased weight, and extended lifespan.** Leading a sedentary lifestyle is often coupled with poor eating habits, high blood pressure, increased stress hormones, and weight gain. However, stepping outside can have the exact opposite effect. Instead of consuming calories, you'll expend them. Any outdoor activity is going to be more beneficial for you physically and mentally and lead to an increased lifespan.
- **Reduced anxiety and depression.** Studies have shown that the lack of outdoor activities in today's modern lifestyle is a major contributing factor to anxiety and depression. While anxiety and depression are oftentimes serious issues that require services from a trained professional, spending time in nature can help. A walk in the forest or day at the beach can boost your mood and self-esteem. For those of you that can't get out, even a simple plant in the room, or pictures of nature, can make you feel less anxious, angry, and stressed.
- **Increased Energy and Motivation.** It is much better to sit outside for 15 or 20 minutes than to reach for that sugary snack or caffeinated beverage. Fresh air is not only good for your mind, but also for your circulatory system. You don't even have to be doing anything. It's perfectly fine to just sit outside and breathe. Therefore, it is important to take periodic breaks from work throughout your day and get outside.
- **Boosted Creativity, focus, and even eyesight.** Studies show that time in nature can boost your creative problem-solving skill. This is partly because the outside world engages your attention in a quieter way that lets you refocus. Spending time outdoors also reduces the odds of developing vision problems later in life. This may be due to low light intensity and increased screen time when indoors.

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