

Nature and Mental Health

Creating a routine to get out into nature can be a great way to improve your physical and mental wellbeing.

Finding the motivation to get out and about can be hard but evidence has shown that time outside regularly can reduce the severity of depression, and reduce feelings of stress, anger and anxiety. You don't need to go far or for long.

Spending time in nature can be as simple as sitting outside in your backyard or going for a walk around your neighbourhood. Just ten minutes in the fresh air is known to have a positive effect on our health and wellbeing. Activities could include:

- **Walking or cycling**
- **Creating art, poetry or prose inspired by nature.**
- **Eating meals outdoors - have a picnic, or simply sit in a garden.**
- **Watching the stars, the sunrise or a sunset.**
- **Beachcombing or litter picking to help the environment**
- **Tree planting or outdoor volunteering**
- **Wildlife watching**
- **Being mindful – finding things to see, hear, taste, smell and touch.**

Sunlight helps to boost levels of vitamin D in our bodies which helps to maintain a healthy immune system and gives us better quality sleep. Too much time indoors under artificial light, especially the harmful blue light from TVs and computer screens, can disrupt sleep.

Most of us have some green space near to our homes and connecting with nature doesn't need to cost anything. Scheduling a little outdoor time into your daily routine can do wonders for your health and wellbeing.

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