

Building Resilience: One Step at a Time

Nature Bathing: Help is Just Outside the Door

What is “Nature Bathing?”

- Also referred to as “forest bathing,” it is spending time in natural spaces, preferably with trees
- If you can find a space with conifers, these trees provide the most benefits
- Immersion in forests can ease stress, worry, and tension while restoring mood, energy, and vitality
- Spending at least at total of two hours each week provides the best benefits
- Even small amounts of time in these environments have shown to have positive impacts

Beneficial organic compounds from plants - especially conifers - help lower blood pressure, are antibacterial, and decrease depression and anxiety. In addition, time outside decreases stress levels and can improve memory, mood, and immune function by mediating stress. Other benefits include improvement in physiological and psychological relaxation, diastolic blood pressure, reductions in stress chemicals, muscle tension, and reduced hostility. These results can begin to manifest very quickly after entering a forest environment – often within a few minutes.

Tips for engaging in nature or forest bathing

- Hiking or jogging are not needed; simply being in nature using your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch
- One can practice forest bathing in any safe nature space by going in silence and going slowly
- Use your senses to experience things in nature that bring you peace and calm
- Switch off - disconnect from the outside world, turn your phone off, avoid machines
- Combine with gentle exercise for greater results
- Add different things to connect – mindfulness, meditation, prayer, deep breathing, slow walking, etc.
- Explore new places, new ways – go on X-C skis, go at night or sun-up or sun-down, walk the dog, etc.

Tips for today

- Make time to take breaks from technology and busyness, and get outside
- Don't let the weather stop you – it works in the rain and cold, too!
- Go out at least twice each week – be among trees and breathe deeply

Additional resources

- <https://www.bluezones.com/2019/06/forest-or-nature-bathing-ancient-practices-modern-uses-and-the-science-of-relaxation/#>
- <https://healingforest.org/2020/01/27/forest-bathing-guide/>