

# Nature & Elder Health

2 hours/week, 20+ minutes at a time. That's all it takes.

Research shows that people who spend at least 2 hours in nature each week report significantly better health and wellbeing.<sup>i</sup> Science suggests that the most efficient drop in cortisol (stress hormone) levels happens between 20 to 30 minutes<sup>ii</sup> – hence our 20-minute rule.

## Spending time in nature

### MAKES YOU FEEL YOUNGER

Living in a neighbourhood with 10 more trees per block improves your health perception similar to taking 7 years off your age.<sup>iii</sup>

### KEEPS YOUR MIND SHARP

Seniors who garden reduce their risk of dementia by 36%—even more than those who walk every day.<sup>iv</sup>

### REDUCES YOUR RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE

Spending more time in green space drops your risk of asthma, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke.<sup>v</sup>

### BOOSTS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Adults who take short day trips to the woods boost their levels of immunoproteins and natural killer cells for at least 7 days.<sup>vi</sup>

### INCREASES YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY

Elders who reside closer to walkable green spaces live longer—no matter what your age, general health or income is.<sup>vii</sup>

## Make the most of your nature prescription with these simple tips

### 1. MAKE EASY GREEN TWEAKS TO YOUR ROUTINE

Avoid adding extra time and effort by substituting outdoor activities for indoor ones.

### 2. WRITE NATURE INTO YOUR SCHEDULE

Prioritize your date with nature by adding it to your calendar or day planner.

### 3. PHONE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

Making it a team effort increases your chances of meeting your goals.

### 4. RESPECT NATURE—AND YOURSELF

Dress for the weather, stay on the trail and pack out what you pack in. For more on how to get outside safely and responsibly, visit our friends at [AdventureSmart](#).

### 5. DO WHAT FEELS RIGHT FOR YOU

The health benefits of nature start to add up when you feel like you've had a meaningful nature experience.

<sup>i</sup> White, M.P. et al. *Sci Rep* 9, 7730 (2019), <sup>ii</sup> Hunter, M.R. et al. *Front Psychol* 10, 722 (2019), <sup>iii</sup> Kardan, O. et al. *Sci Rep* 5, 11610 (2015), <sup>iv</sup> Simons, L.A. et al. *MJA* 184, 68 (2006), <sup>v</sup> Twohig-Bennett, C. & Jones, A. *Environ Res* 166, 628 (2018), <sup>vi</sup> Li, Q. et al. *J Biol Regul Homeostat Agents* 24, 157 (2010), <sup>vii</sup> Takano, T. et al. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 56, 913 (2002).



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**Healthy by Nature**

From BC Parks Foundation