

# Nature & Mental 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

### BUSTS STRESS

Sitting in a forest for just 15 minutes significantly reduces your heart rate variability—while sitting on a urban street does nothing.<sup>iii</sup>

### MAKES YOU FEEL RICHER

Living in a neighbourhood with 10 more trees per block improves your health perception similar to a \$10,000 increase in your personal annual income.<sup>iv</sup>

### INCREASES YOUR HAPPINESS

9 in 10 Canadians say they feel happier when they're more connected to nature.<sup>v</sup>

### GIVES YOUR BRAIN A REST

People who take a walk in green space instead of on a busy street have fewer repetitive, racing thoughts.<sup>vi</sup>

### CONNECTS YOU TO OTHERS

Spending time in neighbourhood green spaces makes you feel more connected to your community and improves social cohesion.<sup>vii</sup>

### BOOSTS SELF-ESTEEM

Spending time in nature can improve self-esteem in as little as 5 minutes.<sup>viii</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> Kobayashi, H. et al. *Altern Med* 2015, 671094 (2015); <sup>iv</sup> Kardan, O. et al. *Sci Rep* 5, 11610 (2015); <sup>v</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/nine-ten-87-canadians-say-when-connected-nature-theyfeel-happier> <sup>vi</sup> Bratman, G.N. et al. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 112, 8567 (2015); <sup>vii</sup> Bratman, G.N. et al. *Sci Adv* 5, eaax0903 (2019); <sup>viii</sup> Barton, J., Pretty, J. *Environ Sci Technol* 44, 3947 (2010).



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