

July
2021

Environmental Awareness

Unplug and recharge with nature

Our smartphones are glued to our hands and seem to be a permanent extension of who we are. We have the option to stay connected 24/7. With many different screens dividing our attention, it's easy to forget one important connection – a connection with nature. Spending at least 120 minutes weekly in nature is linked with good health and well-being.

Challenge yourself to turn off your devices and enjoy the outdoors this month. Pause to watch a sunset or listen to birds chirping. Make time to walk a tree-lined street to nurture your connection with nature. Spending more time in nature can improve your mood and lower your stress. It may even lead to more generosity and kindness.

Now that summer is here, it's the perfect time to unplug and reconnect with the natural world. Spend time outside to enjoy some fresh air the next time you feel stressed. Find time to take a hike in the woods or plan a camping trip. Many national and state parks have paved trails that are short and easily accessible. If you live in an urban area, simply taking a walk outside without the distraction of screens can improve your mood as well.

Spending more time outside is also a great way to soak up more sunlight. Sunlight may play a large role in improving emotional health. Soaking up the sun outside is a great way to get vitamin D. Spending 5 to 15 minutes, 2 or 3 times a week in the sunlight can improve your energy and mood. Although sunlight is great for your emotional well-being, don't forget to protect your skin. Use broad-spectrum sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher, even when it's cloudy.

If you can't find time to go outside, you can still add a little green to your indoor space. A simple plant in the room can make you feel less stressed. Listening to the sounds of nature, like recorded thunderstorms or ocean waves, is also a great choice when the outdoors isn't accessible to you. For guidance on supporting your personal well-being, talk with your primary care provider.

Source: [GreaterGood.Berkeley.edu](https://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu/), [APA.org](https://www.apa.org/), [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com/)



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Camping checklist

Camping can be a great vacation. It's a great way to escape the distraction of the modern world and connect with nature. There is more to camping than fires and s'mores. Use the list below to help plan a camping trip!

Planning the trip:

1. Pick a location that you and your entire group is comfortable with.
2. Let someone who isn't going with you know where you will be.
3. Check the weather forecast and plan accordingly.

Camping must-haves:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tent | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra food and water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag | <input type="checkbox"/> A first aid kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking backpack | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights and headlamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Map | <input type="checkbox"/> Matches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compass | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire starter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mess kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket knife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain and wind parka | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper and a bag to carry it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothing for unexpected weather | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good hiking boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Bug and tick repellent |

Extra camping tips:

- Trash bags can be used to cover your backpack when it rains.
- Always store your food in sealed containers away from your campsite to prevent bears or other animals from exploring your camp. Hang food items in a tree away from your tent.

Camping, if done right, can be good for both you and nature. With some thorough preparation and education, along with the right equipment, it will be a vacation to remember.