

Connect with nature for better well-being – Earth Day 4/22/24

Spending time outdoors and in nature has many benefits for your health. Whether you're doing outdoor exercises to stay active, growing a garden for fresh fruits and vegetables, or helping the environment by cleaning up your community, nature plays a crucial role in improving our well-being. When you step outside and breathe in the fresh air, listen to the birds chirping, or feel the warmth of the sun, it can boost your spirits, lower stress levels, ease anxiety, and improve your physical and mental health. Experience the positive effects of nature and the outdoors with the help of these tips.

Give yourself a mental break outdoors. Stepping outside for some fresh air, even briefly, can significantly boost your energy and help you refocus on your tasks and responsibilities.

Spend time in the sunlight (and remember your sunscreen). Exposure to natural light can increase serotonin levels (which can improve your mood), regulate your body clock for better sleep patterns, and influence the production of melatonin, a hormone linked to sleep quality.

Go for a walk—a simple and reliable method to spend time outdoors. Take your dog for a walk around the neighborhood instead of just letting them out in the yard. Make a habit of a quick 10-minute lunchtime walk, or plan an after-dinner stroll.

Start a garden. Growing your own produce has many advantages that benefit your health. Beyond promoting physical activity and fresh air exposure, you'll get a homegrown supply of nourishing food to help you improve your nutrition.

Join a Community Supported Agriculture farm (CSA). If you don't have the time or space to start your own garden, a CSA is a great way to participate in growing and tending to your own crops, while getting to share in the harvest. By joining, you purchase a share of the crops of the farm as well as volunteer to do a share of the work. Check out [Localharvest.org](https://www.localharvest.org) to find a CSA in your area.

Explore nature by going to nearby parks or nature areas. Walk, hike, bike, camp, canoe, or kayak to the outdoors to build a special connection with nature and find even more ways to love the environment.

Volunteer for local events that clean up your community, local parks, and outdoor spaces. If there are no clean-up events, you can organize one yourself! It's a great way to work together, help the environment, stay active, and make your community cleaner.

Spending time in nature can make us feel better and healthier. Remember to take some of your breaks outside, enjoy the sun safely, and explore the natural world. These experiences help us feel good, stay healthy, and care for our environment.