

# The Connection Between Nature and Our Health



Most of us instinctively know that being in nature makes us feel good, but did you know that there is a growing body of research and evidence proving that?

We in the Interlake-Eastern region are especially gifted with beautiful nature all around us, and have a unique opportunity to experience these health benefits directly.

The effect of being immersed in nature has been a topic of much study in recent years and has been studied in many countries in the world, including Japan, who have studied the concept as “forest bathing”. Some of the benefits that are being shown from these studies:

- Strengthening the immune system
- Lowering blood pressure
- Reducing stress
- Improving mood
- Increasing the ability to focus
- Decreased anxiety
- Accelerated recovery from surgery or illness (when patients have a “green view” from their hospital room)
- Increased energy level
- Improved sleep
- Increased level of physical activity from outdoor activity
- Although harder to define, some studies have attempted to study happiness and/or spiritual fulfillment in relation to time spent in nature.

Promising research indicates that the benefits are many with minimal investment, so to increase your intake of Vitamin “N” (Nature), here are some ideas to get you started:

- Take the time to go to the beach and enjoy a swim or a walk on the beach.
- If you live near a Park, try out one of the many hiking trails. There are hiking trails in varying degrees of ease or difficulty as well as length.
- Start a walking club and enjoy time with others, or, if you prefer, take the time to unwind by yourself.
- Feed the birds.
- Watch a sunset.
- Watch a sunrise.
- Plant a small container garden and watch it grow.
- Take a workshop on gardening or on wild edibles (only from experts please)
- Try yoga outside.
- Buy a fishing rod. This can also be a solitary destressing activity or, perhaps something you can do with your kids or grand kids.
- Pack a picnic basket.
- Go for a bike ride.
- Camping anyone? There’s nothing like the smell of fresh air in the morning and a campfire at night.
- It’s a cliché, but, take time to smell the roses, and to enjoy and appreciate the moments.

If you enjoyed this article, you may enjoy for further reading:

- [Connecting Canadians with Nature, An Investment in the Well-Being of our Citizens \(Canadian Parks Council\).](#)
- [Stanford researchers find mental health prescription: Nature.](#)
- [Immerse Yourself in a Forest for Better Health – NYS Dept. Of Environment Conservation](#)
- [COVID-19 Information for Manitoba Parks Visitors](#)

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