

Why Time in Nature Is Great for You as a Caregiver

Being outside in sunshine can raise your vitamin D levels and likely improve:

- Bone density
- Asthma
- Heart health

Being in nature helps you move your body and improve your physical health.

Nature sights, sounds and smells can reduce mental fatigue, anxiety, and depression.

Taking care of a garden or plant can balance certain hormone levels which...

can help calm you by improving your digestion, sleep, and blood pressure.

Why Time in Nature Is Great for Your Family

Sharing nature together builds strong relationships



Spending even 10 minutes in nature has positive effects on your family's well-being:

- Reducing stress
- Increasing focus
- Increasing energy
- Improving mood



Connecting with nature can help children improve:

- Self-esteem
- Creativity
- Sense of wonder
- Problem-solving skills

Being in nature helps children improve:

- Physical health
- Motor skills
- Social skills

Spending time in nature can help develop empathy.

Empathy is important for building and strengthening community.

Being part of a community can improve your mental health.



How to Benefit from Nature



Be in nature!

- Look up at the clouds
- Start a rock collection
- Smell a flower
- Have a picnic outside
- Watch for birds
- Move your body

- Walk in a park or grassy area
- Visit a lake, river, or ocean
- Take a close look at a tree
- Tend a garden or add a window box to your home

Put your cell phone on mute (or turn it off!)

Enjoy nature while indoors.



- Look at nature through a window
- Care for an indoor plant
- Watch a nature documentary
- Eat breakfast by a window
- Read a story or poem about nature
- Write or draw about an experience you had or want to have in nature

Build Connections with Nature

Take time to notice nature and how it makes you feel.

- Notice how the leaves on trees blow in the wind
- Observe how different animals move their bodies

Do an activity that involves your senses:

- Pick up some soil and feel it fall through your fingers
- Rub your palm on tree bark or a leaf
- Smell the air and notice whether this changes your breathing
- Sit down outside and notice as many sounds as you can



"In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect."

- Alice Walker, author

Nature and Mental Health Information Sources:

- Louv, Richard. (2016) Vitamin N. The Essential Guide to a Nature Rich Life: 500 Ways to Enrich the Healthy & Happiness of your Family & Community and Combat Nature-Deficit Disorder.
- Etherington, Natasha. (2012) Gardening for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Special Educational Needs.
- Sampson, Scott D (2015). How to Raise a Wild Child.
- Nature: How connecting with nature benefits our mental health | Mental Health Foundation
- The Importance of Community and Mental Health | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness
- Nature Makes You... | National Park Service