

# Get Outside!

With screen time taking more of our attention at work, school, and home than ever before, we are spending more time indoors and often falling into sedentary lifestyle routines.<sup>1</sup> The convenience of online ordering, remote work, and staying connected digitally from the comfort of home may be depriving us of the health benefits that getting outside provides.

## GETTING OUTSIDE IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH!

- » Time spent outdoors can serve as a mental break, benefitting our ability to think and relax.<sup>2</sup>
- » Enjoying time in nature has been found to positively impact our mental health: decreasing feelings of anxiety, stress, and anger.<sup>2</sup>
- » Spending time outside the home allows for in-person social connection, an important way to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Loneliness negatively affects both our mental and physical health.<sup>3</sup>
- » Exposure to sunlight can help to regulate sleep and wake cycles as well as help to combat seasonal affective disorder.<sup>3,4</sup>
- » Heading outdoors presents the opportunity to move your body and breathe fresh air. Exercising benefits both our body and minds.

With busy schedules and seasonal considerations for many parts of the country, it can feel difficult or even unpleasant to get outside. Here are some tips for harnessing those health benefits of the great outdoors all year round:

- **Keep it simple** – Look for little opportunities to get some fresh air every day: have a walking meeting, drink your coffee in the morning sunlight, read a book in the park, stroll around your neighborhood, have a picnic, plant an herb garden, stop by a farmers market, visit a park or playground, jump in the lake, or maybe play fetch with your dog.
- **Plan ahead** – Aim to create space and time in your schedule throughout the week. Consider blocking out short breaks in your work calendar as reminders to step



away and get outside. A short meditation break in fresh air can make all the difference.

- **Involve family or friends** – Connect with others while going for a walk, a run, or maybe even a hike. Making plans with others helps to hold you accountable to your intentions despite competing priorities and despite the weather.
- **Dress accordingly** – Invest in proper footwear and functional outerwear to make spending time outdoors more comfortable no matter the season. You may even find that you can skip the crowds or get off-season discounts at local attractions when you're willing to visit when the weather is less than ideal.
- **Join a club, team, or community group** – Seek opportunities to connect with others who have similar interests. Look for ways to combine social connection with outdoor activities, such as running or biking clubs, charity walks, recreational sports teams, or even local classes to help you learn new outdoor skills.

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2. UC Davis Health. (2023, May 3). 3 ways getting outside into nature helps improve your health. <https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/3-ways-getting-outside-into-nature-helps-improve-your-health/2023/05>

3. Berg, S. (2023, July 14). What doctors wish patients knew about loneliness and health. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/what-doctors-wish-patients-knew-about-loneliness-and-health>

4. Mayo Clinic Staff. (2021, December 14). Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) - Diagnosis & treatment. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved February 19, 2025, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20364722>