

Guided Nature Bathing

What

Any time you have a meaningful connection with nature the health benefits start to add up. This activity is based on a Japanese practice called “Shinrin-Yoku” or “Forest Bathing”. It emphasizes mindfulness and using your senses to focus on nature’s patterns.

Where

Any natural space. This activity could be done as a walk with periodic pauses, or in a single location.

How

This activity is meant to help you connect with nature, so put away the technology and focus on the present. **This activity can be done individually or in a group.** If in a group, talk about your experiences after each exercise (e.g. did everyone smell similar things?).

Instructions

1. Find your nature spot: head out to a nearby trail, park, garden or other quiet green or blue space.
2. Review the activity: there are 4 different exercises to do during the activity. Review them ahead of time to know what to expect.
3. Proceed with the exercises: try one or all four to deepen your connection to nature.
4. Reflect on how you feel: after the last exercise, take a moment to check in with how you’re feeling. Do you notice any differences from before you started?

Exercises

1. Nature breathing (5 minutes)
 - a. Slowly and quietly find a spot to nature breathe. Sit down if needed.
 - b. Place your hands on your belly and inhale, filling your belly and low back like a balloon. Exhale fully. Take 3 deep breaths.
 - c. Inhale into your belly and ribcage. Exhale fully. Take 3 breaths.
 - d. Repeat for 5 minutes or more.
2. Listen closely, smell strongly (5 minutes)
 - a. Slowly and quietly find a spot to listen to and smell your surroundings. Sit down if needed.
 - b. Focus in on the sounds and smells around you. Try to identify 3 different sounds and 3 different smells.
3. Touch gently, feel softly (5 minutes)
 - a. If available, find a tree. Or find another object in nature (grass, bush, etc.).
 - b. Gently touch the object with your hands. How does it feel? Try to identify 3 adjectives (e.g. rough, smooth, wet).
 - c. If you’ve found a tree, gently hug it. Try the same breathing techniques from Exercise 1.
4. Look carefully, watch curiously (15 minutes)
 - a. Find another spot to sit or stand. Focus your attention on what you can see.
 - b. Focus first on what is closest to you, as if with a magnifying glass. Slowly widen your scope and observe outwardly, a small distance at a time.
 - c. What shapes do you see? What colours? What makes you curious?



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