

Time Together Outside: Improve Life & Well-Being for People who Live in, Work at, or Visit Older Adult Community Living Settings

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Even a few minutes outside reaps health benefits...

- Decreases blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones
- Facilitates social connectedness and bonds with others, feelings of empathy
- Increases activity level which can enhance appetite and improve sleep
- Inspires awe and wonder and feeling connected to something greater than self
- Improves balance and agility
- Enhances vision
- Stimulates vitamin D, bone growth, healing, and immune function
- Lessens anxiety and rumination
- Reduces pain and swelling
- Engages senses and soothes mind
- Boosts creativity and self esteem
- Fosters environmental awareness and stewardship



Minnesota Department of Health Mental Well-Being & Resilience Learning Community, "An Introduction to Nature Rx and Forest Bathing" Presentation by Sara Holger. March 28, 2023 -

- Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides <https://www.natureandforesttherapy.earth/about/the-science>

Photo from pixabay.com

Thank you!

Breanna Wheeler is a MN Master Naturalist/Instructor and Independent Contractor who focuses on helping secure funding and manage intergenerational nature connection and conservation projects to benefit health and wellness. She served as Executive Director of River Bend Nature Center in Faribault, MN and before that, spent over a decade as a nursing home activity director where her favorite thing was seeing how residents and caregivers would light up during time outside. She promotes age and dementia friendly communities and works to champion the value that older adults can bring to the world around them while respecting each person's individuality, journey, and choices. Breanna has a Master of Public Affairs degree from the University of MN where she concentrated on aging policy and a Bachelor of Science from MN State University Mankato in Sociology and Environmental Science with a minor in Recreation, Parks & Leisure Services.

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AGE FRIENDLY
minnesota

Resource List

PLACES

LOCAL -

- Your own backyard or shared space, homes of friends, family or neighbors
- Libraries / Community education
- Nature centers / environmental learning centers
- Parks - Do a local parks challenge - research the parks in your city or county and see how many you can visit
- Senior center / community center

STATEWIDE -

- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
 - Accessible Outdoors
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/accessible_outdoors/index.html
 - State Public Lands
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/publiclands/index.html>
 - State parks - Check out the passport and hiking club, I Can programs
 - State forests
 - State trails
 - Other: Wildlife Management Areas, Aquatic Management Areas, Scientific & Natural Areas
- Federal Lands
 - US National Parks / Monuments / Trails in MN
<https://www.nps.gov/state/mn/index.htm>
 - US National Forests in MN
 - Chippewa National Forest <https://www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa>
 - Superior National Forest <https://www.fs.usda.gov/superior>
 - US Fish & Wildlife Lands
https://www.fws.gov/our-facilities?state_name=%5B%22Minnesota%22%5D

PROGRAMS / ORGANIZATIONS

- Age Friendly Minnesota <https://mn.gov/dhs/age-friendly-mn/>
- Area Agency on Aging
<https://mn.gov/board-on-aging/about-us/area-agencies/>
- BIPOC Outdoors Twin Cities
<http://www.ashamarie.com/bipocoutdoorstwincities>
- Build a Pollinator Habitat
<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/residential-pollinator-habitat>

- Capable Partners <https://www.capablepartners.org/>
- CBS Sunday Morning Moment in Nature <https://www.youtube.com/@CBSSundayMorning>
- Diversity in the Outdoors: BIPOC Led Organizations and BIPOC Hikers Who Inspire Us <https://www.52hikechallenge.com/blogs/blog/lets-diversify-outdoors-connect-with-these-adventurous-bipoc-organizations-individuals>
- Forest Therapy <https://www.natureandforesttherapy.earth/about/the-practice-of-forest-therapy>
- Friends of the Mississippi <https://fmr.org/>
- Great River Greening <https://www.greatrivergreening.org/>
- Healing Gardens <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/healing-environment/what-are-healing-gardens>
- Healing Waters Fly Fishing <https://projecthealingwaters.org/>
- Hiking Clubs in MN <https://www.hikingproject.com/directory/clubs/minnesota>
- Let's Go Fishing <https://lgfws.com/>
- Mental Health Benefits of Bird Watching <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/winter-2019/birding-benefits-how-nature-improves-our-mental>
- Midwest Outdoors Unlimited <https://www.midwestoutdoorsunlimited.com/>
- Minnesota Birder Looks to Make Nature More Accessible and Inclusive <https://www.axios.com/local/twin-cities/2022/08/17/minnesota-birder-nature-accessible-inclusive>
- Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging Member Organizations <https://www.mnlcoa.org/members>
- MN Master Naturalist <https://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/>
- MN Thrives Database <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/mnthrives.html>
- Minnesota Rovers Outdoor Club <https://mnrovers.org/>
- Minnesota Veterans Outdoors <https://www.mnvetsoutdoors.org/>
- Nature on PBS <https://www.youtube.com/@naturepbs/videos>
- Park Rx America <https://parkrxamerica.org/>
- Parks & Trails Council of MN Outdoor Clubs <https://www.parksandtrails.org/outdoor-clubs-in-minnesota/>
- Phenology Report with John Latimer on KAXE <https://www.kaxe.org/podcast/phenology>
- United Foundation for Disabled Archers <http://www.uffdaclub.com/>
- University of MN Extension <https://extension.umn.edu/natural-resources>
- Wilderness Inquiry <https://www.wildernessinquiry.org/>

APPS

- AllTrails <https://www.alltrails.com/>
- eBird <https://ebird.org/home>
- EDDMapS <https://www.eddmaps.org/>
- iNaturalist <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
- Merlin <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>
- Zooniverse <https://www.zooniverse.org/>

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS*

- 30 Minute Options:
 - Sit Spot: Find a closeby space you can visit often/easily (your backyard or in your neighborhood). Try to visit at least once a week and sit for at least 30 minutes. Be present and use all your senses to notice what is around you.
 - "Noticing Workout": Walk around, pay attention, take pictures, coined by Bill Keaggy
- Nature Journal: Sketchbook for writing and drawing, take notes of what you observe
- Notice with all your senses
- Individualize: Think about/learn how others have connected with nature (or not) in the past - remember, not everyone has positive experiences connected with the outdoors and we should respect and seek to understand. What are ways you/people you serve connect with (or connected with) nature?
- Prompts: I notice..., I wonder..., It reminds me of...
- Misc: Garden, watch clouds, watch fireflies, watch birds, skip rocks, tell me a story about... (a snake, a raccoon, a turtle, a storm, etc.)
- Find awe and wonder in nature to reset our brains at any age, get out of everyday concerns
- Make it simple: You don't have to go somewhere or spend money
- Inside ideas: houseplants, cut flowers, apps with nature sounds, natural light lamp, open the windows, wildlife webcams, birdwatching, bird feeder, binoculars, grow herbs, adventure books/movies/podcasts, cooking, aromatherapy
- Slow down.
- Do more things that make you forget to check your phone.

* some suggestions inspired by Forest Bathing - Mindfulness in Nature Tip Sheet, by Sara Holger