

The health benefits of nature

We are often told to spend more time outdoors but why is this important? Is it just the exercise that's good for us?

There are many benefits to being outside beyond exercise.

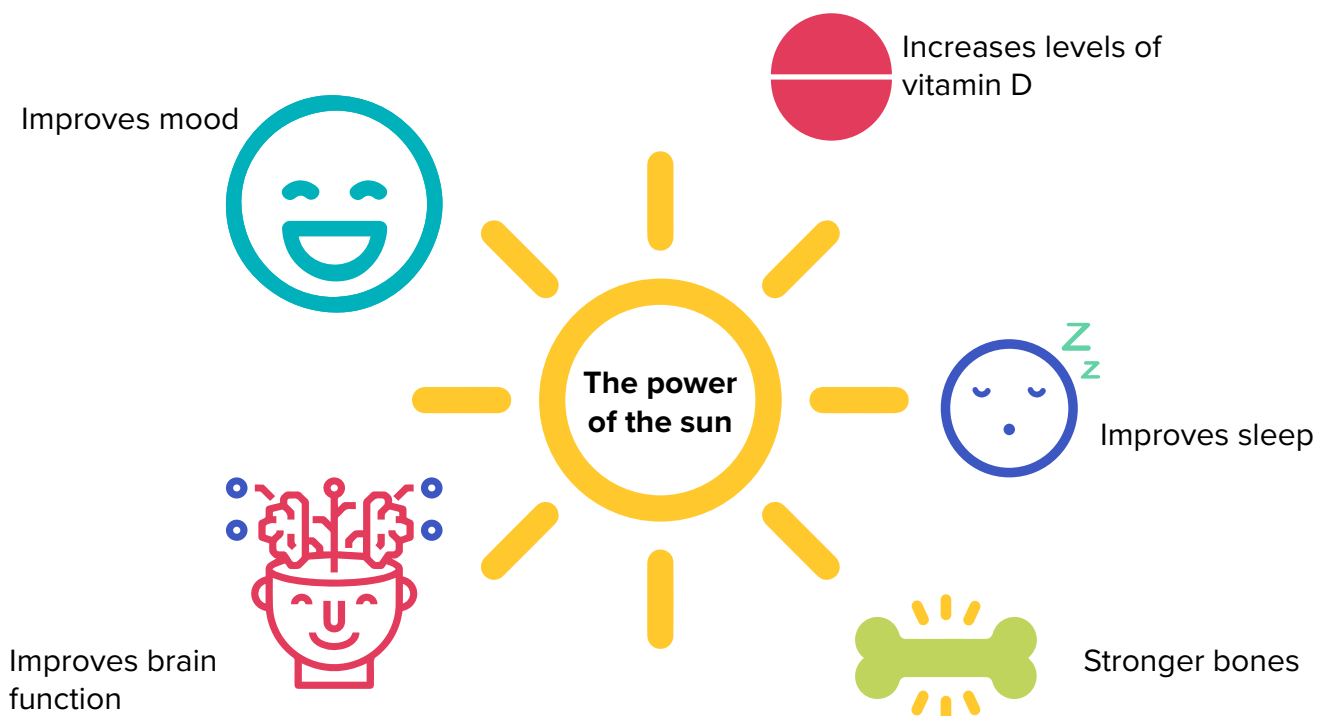
- Having time outside can break up your day.
- Being in “green spaces”: areas where there are trees, grass, or plants, such as a park, has been shown to reduce stress and improve mood. Spending time in green spaces has even been linked to improvements in physical health.
- These benefits may be enhanced when we are also able to walk or sit by “blue spaces” for example rivers, the sea, or lakes. These have also been shown to enhance wellbeing.

Why is this?

We aren't totally sure! It may be that spending time outdoors is a basic human need, often called nature-connectedness. This need is one that can be easily neglected in our busy lives.

Nature-connectedness covers a lot of things, including the time we spend outside, with animals, and even the time we spend appreciating where our food comes from.

Another reason being outside helps our wellbeing is due to the health benefits of small amounts of sun exposure.



So, what if you can't get out? Or you have been told you must self-isolate? Well, there are a few things you can do to bring nature to you:

- Have house plants.
- Spend time with your pets.
- Keep fresh herbs in the kitchen.
- Grow your own vegetables in your garden or patio
- Sit in your garden if you have one, or just outside your front door
- Position your chair to face out of the window.
- Watch nature documentaries.
- Get yourself a bird watching book and start seeing what you can spot out of your window.

Remember, whilst getting out in nature is very valuable, it is also important to wear sunscreen to protect your skin.

Enjoy your green and blue spaces!