

JUNE NEWSLETTER

What the Outdoors Can Teach Us About Healing



The outdoors is super cool. Maybe I'm just a nature nerd, but it offers so many incredible benefits that are often overlooked or missed due to the incredible busyness in our society and lives. Somewhere along the way nature became a choice and was then considered a past time. But by trading the outdoors for indoors, what did we lose?

In This Issue:

What the
Outdoors Can
Teach Us About
Healing

PAGE 01

Introducing
Nature Based
Therapy

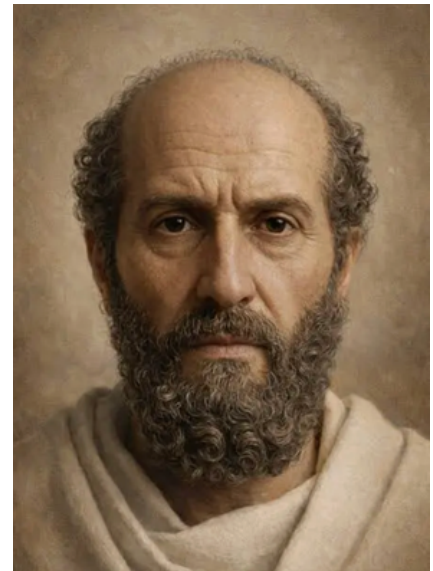
PAGE 05

Announcements,
Updates,
This & That

PAGE 04

The Healing Power of Nature

The idea that nature has the capacity to heal us is very old. Hippocrates, who is considered to be the founding Father of modern medicine, famously studied what he called *vis medicatrix naturae*. In English this translates to ‘the healing power of nature’. What he discovered was that a person’s physical and mental well-being is heavily influenced by geography, climate, seasons, and the quality of local resources. In 2026 this concept still holds up. It has been consistently reported to this day that people who are exposed to nature and natural environments have increased well-being. Today we call this eco-psychology, which is the study of the relationship between human psychology and the natural world, positing that connection to nature is essential for mental well-being.



An AI image of what Hippocrates of Kos may have looked like around 480BC

How Nature Improves Well-Being

Nature is incredible. Just by sitting outdoors it helps regulate and balance our hormones by reducing cortisol, lowering blood pressure, restoring attention spans, increasing dopamine. It is truly magic. One of the ideas that helps explain why our bodies and brains respond so well to nature is biophilia. This is the concept that humans are naturally drawn to and soothed by the natural world because we evolved within it. Biophilia suggests we carry a genetically encoded affinity for the natural world. This biological drive explains our instinctive attraction to living things, animals, and natural landscapes. Our brains and bodies were not built for constant artificial stimulation and indoor living in our urban lives partially because it takes millions of years for animals (including humans) to evolve but it took less than 1000 years for us to create the society we live in today.



Newfoundland fisherman working



What Nature Does for You

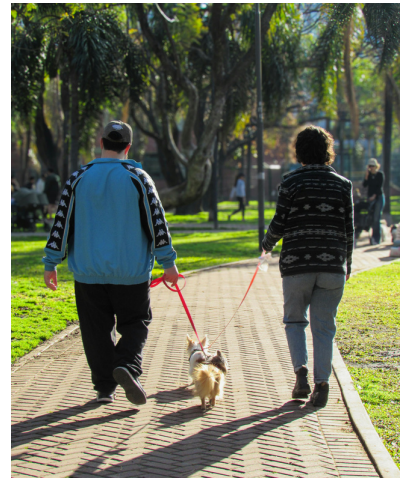
I really struggled trying to write a paragraph describing what being in nature does for you and how great it is. There was just too much. So instead I compiled a list of scientifically proven outcomes of how spending time in nature impacts your well being.

- Just 10 to 20 minutes in nature measurably lowers cortisol (the stress hormone) in your body and soothes the nervous system.
- Unlike the constant demands of screens and urban environments, natural settings gently engage your brain. This recharges your mental battery and can significantly reduce Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) symptoms.
- Studies have shown that stepping away into nature can lead to a significant spike in problem-solving ability and creativity.
- Time outdoors directly correlates with lowered heart rates, reduced muscle tension, and decreased blood pressure.
- Merely viewing natural landscapes or being in green/blue spaces can distract the brain from physical discomfort, help reset circadian rhythms, and improve overall sleep quality.
- Exposure to the outdoors releases endorphins and dopamine, naturally promoting feelings of happiness and fighting off symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Nature tends to increase generosity, cooperation, and our sense of social connection.
- Nature can also help with the grief process. This is because exposure to nature causes better coping, including improved self-awareness, self-concept, and positively affected mood.
- One study concluded that a microbe found in soil may improve the body's immune response.

Ways to Re-Nature Your Life

Spending time in nature does not need to be difficult. Nor does it mean spending your entire day out in the woods.

Based on study 'nature' is considered to everything in the natural physical environment. This includes, bodies of water (oceans, lakes, rivers, pond, swamps, etc), forests, mountains, trees, parks, gardens, and animals (including your cats and dogs).



Just as there are recommendations for the amount of exercise to get and vegetables to eat, there's a benchmark for the amount of time in nature needed to boost well-being. Research suggests that that point is about two hours per week. This breaks down to about 20 minutes per day. However, research shows that just a few minutes (1–10 minutes) of exposure to nature can boost attention and longer periods of time (15–20 minutes) is the minimum amount to reduce stress hormones.

Here are some suggestions to help you fit in your ideal amount of nature in as easily as possible.

- Go for a walk in a park or around your neighbourhood
- Sit outside in your yard or on your deck
- Sit in your car to look at a beautiful view
- Garden and have plants in your home
- Notice flowers, trees, birds, and other animals around you as you travel to school or work
- Open your windows when driving or at home
- If you are unable to get outside look at nature images through art or in virtual ways, like online or on TV
- Listen to recordings of nature sounds while you work or go to sleep (e.g., birds chirping, waves)

Introducing Nature Based Therapy

Some of you may have heard that taking your therapy session outside is just around the corner! As of June 3rd I will be launching a 3 week Nature Based Therapy pilot project. There have been 10 pre-selected clients who will be moving their typical therapy session into the outdoors. Once the pilot project is complete nature based therapy sessions will be offered on a case-by-case basis to pre-existing therapy clients.

Did you know?

Olivia's entire 10 years of post secondary education has been dedicated to doing outdoor therapy! She received her undergraduate degree in Adventure Therapy from Thompson Rivers University in 2018 and did a 2 year diploma in Outdoor Adventure Guiding at Algonquin College. She also worked as a professional sea kayaking guide, backpacking/hiking guide, and outdoor educator for several years before becoming a therapist



How do I take part?

After the completion of the pilot project this will be offered to select therapy clients. To become a therapy client you must complete a consultation with Olivia and then book your first session! Please note that your first sessions will not be outside for risk management purposes.

Updates, This & That

It's Self Care Summer!

We want you to share how you are taking care of yourself this summer. Grab a marker and a piece of paper from the coffee table and post it on the door. If you want to be entered in a 60-minute massage give away take a picture and share it to your socials! Don't forget to tag us @alignchironl. The winner will be announced September 1st!

