



Mental health

AND THE CALMING REFRAINS OF

Nature



The rise in mental health statistics in Australia indicates that we need more intervention in our lives. Spending time in nature has been found to improve mental health of adults and children. Some find purpose in nature while others are so busy they don't get the time to stop, slow down and take a breath. In a busy stressful life it can be difficult to see the value in spending time in nature. But research from around the globe continues to find that nature is good for us. Not only does it improve our physical health but is fundamental to our mental health. We encourage you, your family and friends to reach out to one another and embark on some of these activities...

Take a walk in nature

Spending time in nature has been found to reduce stress, improve concentration and help relax our busy minds. Take a walk with friends, family or by yourself and turn any devices off - nature is best experienced without any technological distractions.

Find a sit spot

A sit spot can provide an important window of relaxation and slow the world and your mind down. Find a spot where you can listen to the birds, the wind or sit quietly with a friend or family member. If you can, between 20 and 30 minutes is ideal.

Spend time together

Spending time in nature together can strengthen social interactions and connections with people. The relationships in our lives are fundamental to mental health. With family or friends head out to a park or local patch of nature and pack a picnic. Tell stories, share thoughts or simply enjoy the company and your surroundings.

Prepare seasonal food and share it

Cooking is an ideal opportunity to work together, learn new skills and build confidence. It provides a sense of achievement and pride. By using home grown and/or seasonal produce we can also tune into the seasons and be more likely to garden and spend time outside. Set some time aside and cook as a family or with a friend and share it with some special people in your life.

Get into the garden

Gardening has many benefits such as physical exercise, vitamin D exposure, stress reduction, having a sense of responsibility and having the time to nurture something separate from the stresses of our daily lives. Spend a morning in the garden with family, friends or take time out and do it by yourself. Planting something and watching it grow can bring many rewards for children and adults.

Read to the sounds of nature

Reading can immerse our minds in imaginary worlds whilst helping us to focus and concentrate. It can also provide us a better night sleep. When reading in nature, the sounds and sensations can further help us relax and find composure in our lives. Head to your local park or set up in your backyard with a rug and some books to spend a morning or afternoon reading.

Create something inspired by nature

Being inspired can help us create and express our emotions. Nature can be a source of inspiration for many with its colours, patterns, sounds and the feelings it evokes. Whether it be writing, recording or sketching thoughts and observations, painting, singing, dancing or making – it can help us slow down, breathe and find our own inspiration.

Observe the birds

Taking the time to observe birds is a powerful form of mindfulness. It slows down the mind and helps you be present in a moment. Mindfulness can be an effective strategy to improving mental health. Birds are not only beautiful but their lives are fascinating and we gain insight from simply watching them.

*I go to nature to be
soothed and healed
and to have my senses
put in order*

JOHN BURROUGHS



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