



Spend Time Outdoors

CHALLENGE

Get outside to boost health & happiness

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Spend Time Outdoors."
2. Create a plan to spend more time outside (aim for 120+ minutes a week)
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When the young Cheryl Strayed reached a tipping point in her life, she wasn't happy.

Her marriage failed. Her mother died. She bounced from one job to the next as a journalist, waitress, office worker, youth advocate, and medical technician.

She made a lot of unhealthy choices. And she knew something had to change.

So she filled a backpack with a few essentials, put on some hiking boots, and headed for the great outdoors.

For the next three months, Strayed hiked north from California to Washington, along 1,100 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. The journey changed her life and inspired her best-selling memoir, *Wild*.

You may not be planning to hike a thousand miles or go on a three-month camping trip. But spending some time outside is good for your health and happiness. Take the month-long health challenge to Spend Time Outdoors.

5 health benefits of spending time in nature
<https://tinyurl.com/2vxb7es5>

The Fabulous Fresh-Air Quiz

How much do you know about the health benefits of spending time outdoors? Take the quiz to find out.



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1. The average adult spends 75% of their time inside (home, office, store, car).
2. People who spend 120+ minutes per week outside are happier than those who don't.
3. Spending time in natural settings (parks, trails, greenspace, beach, etc.) can help reduce stress and lower blood pressure.
4. Just a few minutes in the sun each day can boost vitamin D levels, improve bone health, and strengthen the immune system.
5. Exercising outside increases serotonin levels and helps reduce depression and anxiety.

How did you do? Most adults spend 93% of their time indoors.¹ How much time do you spend outside per day or per week? Research shows spending time outdoors in natural settings can have a positive impact on your physical and mental health.

Answers: 1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. True, 5. True.

Step Outside: 11 Health Benefits of the Great Outdoors

Have you ever felt a little stressed out, overwhelmed, or in a funk? Or maybe you're looking for ways to improve your health and prevent disease. Do this: Step outside a little more often.

Researchers looked at data from 143 studies and found that spending time outdoors may help:²

1. Improve mood
2. Lower blood pressure
3. Reduce stress
4. Increase longevity



5. Prevent and control diabetes
6. Raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels
7. Lower the risk for certain types of cancers

Research also shows spending time outdoors can help:³

8. Increase vitamin D levels
9. Strengthen the immune system
10. Support weight management
11. Boost creativity