

15 Simple Ways to Spend More Time Outside

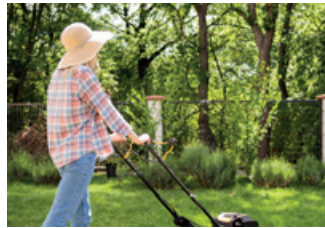
Want to improve your health and feel happier? Spend more time outside.

You don't have to spend three months outside or walk 1,100 miles like Cheryl Strayed did on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Instead, spend a few minutes outside every day (and maybe a little more on the weekend). Check out these simple ways to spend more time outside:

At Home

1 Work in the yard. Mow the lawn. Water the flowers. Plant a garden. If you don't have a yard, help a friend who does.



2 Eat en plein air. That's French for "outside." Make breakfast, lunch or dinner, and enjoy it outside. Try the deck, backyard, balcony or driveway.

3 Chat with neighbors. Remember this? Most adults spend 93% of their time indoors. Take a walk and visit your neighbors.

4 Get the mail. If you have a community mailbox, take a walk to get it (instead of driving up to the curb...you've seen people do this, right?)

5 Go for a walk. Walk the dog. Take a stroll through the neighborhood. If it's close enough, walk to complete simple errands. Just walk to the end of the street. Or swap a gym workout for jogging or running outside.

At Work

6 Host a walking meeting. You know...instead of sitting in a conference room or staring at a screen on a video call.



7 Eat lunch outside. Take your lunch to an outdoor eating area or nearby park. If you go out to eat, eat outside when the weather's good.

8 Take a walk break...outside. Take a short walk break a couple times a day. Just 15 to 20 minutes can boost your mood and creative juices.

9 Read outside. Maybe you've got a lot of paperwork to sift through. Or you want to take a break to read something a little lighter like a novel or magazine. Find a place where you can read outside.

10 work-week tips to spend more time outside
<https://tinyurl.com/wr7efx2s>

HealthyRx: Spend 120+ minutes a week outside



Starting to get the picture? Spending time outdoors is good for your health and happiness. But how much time makes a difference?

- **120+ minutes per week.** In a study of 20,000 people, researchers found that people who spend at least 120 minutes a week in nature are happier and healthier than those who don't.⁴
- **Break it up.** Researchers also found that spending less than 120 minutes per week outside wasn't enough to provide measurable health benefits. Break it up into smaller chunks of time that fit your schedule.
- **Don't forget the sunscreen.** If you're going to be outside for longer than 10+ minutes in direct sun, don't forget the sunscreen. Sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 or higher blocks 97% of the sun's harmful rays.⁵

Mood makeover: Get back to nature
<https://tinyurl.com/2p9fsjce>

Out and About

10 Park far away... when you go to the store. Then walk across the parking lot.

11 Go for a hike. Find a trail, nature park or greenspace in your area and hike or walk.



12 Plan a picnic. Pack a lunch with your favorite foods and find a place to have a picnic like a park, beach, or even your backyard.

13 Try camping or glamping. Pack your tent, sleeping bags and camping gear for a night in the outdoors. Or make it a little easier and stay in an RV, cabin, yurt, or rental where you can get away and get outside.

14 Look up at the sky. Catch a sunset. Or go outside on a clear night and look up at the sky.

15 Go exploring. Chances are pretty good there's some outdoor gems in your area you haven't been to yet. Go exploring. Get outside and visit a park, trail, lake, beach, or natural area you haven't been to before.

References

1. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021). Indoor air quality: What are the trends in indoor air quality and their effects on human health? From: <https://tinyurl.com/4juun484>
2. Twohig-Bennett, C., et al. (2018). The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. *Environmental Research*, 166: 628-637. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yz5xtepa>
3. Seppala, E., et al. (2017). Why you should tell your team to take a break and go outside. *Harvard Business Review*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mv3uy9bk>
4. White, M., et al. (2019). Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports*, 9: 7730. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mr7f49kd>
5. American Academy of Dermatology Association. (2022). Sunscreen FAQs. From: <https://tinyurl.com/m895sb53>