

RECHARGE BODY & MIND OUTDOORS

At Nordisk we believe that you can recharge both body and mind by being outdoors. Nature is a natural energy booster – wind in your hair, rain on your face, bird song in your ears and the smell of seawater in your nostrils is pure fuel for both body and mind. And just like a battery needs to be recharged once in a while, you should treat yourself with a few hours – or a few days or weeks – in the great outdoors once in a while.



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OUTDOORLIFE PREVENTS STRESS

Did you know that nature can prevent you from getting stressed? Several studies conclude that being outside among trees, mountains, lakes and flowers reduces the risk of stress and anxiety. Danish psychologist Mariann Keis explains why.

Modern life is full of demands and information overflow: To-do-lists, time tables, tasks, deadlines, meetings, endless news, endless information, things we want to do and things we regret we haven't done.

"In the modern workplace we are very busy and we are exposed to a huge information flow – and this creates a mental tiredness. If in addition we are affected by other circumstances like illness or a busy family life, and therefore are less effective at work for a period of time, it creates a feeling of stress. An overwhelming feeling of unfulfilled demands," explains Danish psychologist Mariann Keis who is specialised in combining psychological therapy with being outside in nature.

Nature is the exact opposite of the demanding daily life and therefore it provides a way to prevent getting stressed.



A place with no demands

"Research shows that therapy in nature is ideal for preventing stress and anxiety, because nature doesn't demand anything from you. It is just there. In nature you experience deep intimacy and peace and you connect with nature and with yourself. You literally connect with your roots: Thousands of years ago man sat in nature for days hunting for animals," explains Mariann Keis.

"Nature is a perfect place to re-learn how to relax and pause because it is a place you can go without meeting any demands"

So one of the keys to prevent and even cure stress is just outside our door in the forests, mountains, hills and even parks.

"One of the characteristics of stress is that the inner arousal is heightened. You are restless and unable to calm down and unable to find happiness. Often when people start to get stressed they skip the little breaks in daily life, like a run in the woods, a night out with your friends, reading a book. And that is a vicious circle, because the stress will increase from this. Nature is a perfect place to re-learn how to relax and take a break because it is a place you can go without meeting any demands," says Mariann Keis.

Let the wind sweep the stress away

When a person is stressed the level a hormone called cortisol in the blood rises. This is okay for a short period of time, but if the level of cortisol is constantly high it can cause blood clot and other cardiovascular diseases. Stress also increases the risk of depression. So lowering the cortisol in your blood is the key to preventing stress and stress related diseases.



Mariann Keis

Mariann Keis is cand.psych from University of Aarhus, Denmark, and a licensed psychologist. Her therapy room is placed in the middle of the forest with panoramic view of trees, sky and the colours of the forest floor. She uses nature and the forest actively in therapy and offer courses and retreats situated in the woods.



“Research shows that being outside in nature lowers the blood pressure, improves motoric skills, and strengthens the immune system”

“By relaxing, you lower the level of cortisol, and nature is the best place to calm down because nature doesn’t demand anything but lets you truly relax. Research shows that being outside in nature lowers the blood pressure, improves motoric skills, and strengthens the immune system. It also shows that people who are active in nature are in better general health, happier and less stressed,” says Mariann Keis.

Do you dare to do nothing?

It sounds very simple: Just go outside in nature and you’ll feel better, but actually it can be very hard:

“It’s not easy just to sit down and let go for no purpose. We have to re-learn to just be, without a purpose. It is an ability you train and it takes practise. But staying in nature without a purpose sharpens our senses and gives us a strong feeling of the present. We see the wealth around us if our mind is open,” says Mariann Keis.

Need some help to just relax in nature? See the Mariann Keis’ mini guide to mindfulness in nature on the next page



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