

CANYON RANCH.

5 HEALING BENEFITS TO EXPLORING NATURE FROM CANYON RANCH EXPERTS

July 2018 – People have always been interested in the healing power of nature. Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, his classic meditation on life and nature, while spending two years secluded in the woods of Massachusetts. Thoreau could sense, even in 1845, that outdoor settings can help to calm and focus the mind, and improve your health.

Today, ecopsychology – the study of the relationship between humans and the natural world – is a growing area. Studies have shown that spending time in nature can reduce stress, improve feelings of overall wellbeing and happiness, raise energy levels and even increase caring capacity.

Beginning to explore nature and reap the health benefits can be simple. Making time to sit in the backyard, whether just relaxing or investing time in a garden, without distractions such as phones, tablets, or books can help center you. Moving exercise or meals outside can help to nurture your body and soul.

If you can't spend as much time in nature as you would like, bring some of the outdoors to you. Adding plants or fountains, even pictures of nature, to any environment can help to soothe and motivate you.

1. IT BOOSTS YOUR MOOD

Stepping outdoors into the warmth of a sunny day is a great way to bring a smile to your face, and there's a reason for that. Sunlight provides you with nourishing, energizing vitamin D, which has been shown to boost mood, calm the nervous system and improve issues such as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Beyond this, vitamin D also promotes calcium absorption in the body, and getting the proper amount of it can minimize the risk of hypertension, cancer and certain autoimmune diseases.

2. IT KEEPS YOU IN THE PRESENT

Unplugging from daily life and getting outdoors allows you to focus on the now. At its essence, connecting with nature encourages you to be in the present moment, to quiet your mind and take in the sights, sounds and smells that surround you, and that you may not have noticed in a while. A basic form of meditation, bringing your attention to the present (rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future) can minimize stress and anxiety.

3. IT ENERGIZES YOU

While you may think a double espresso is the key to getting over an afternoon slump, research suggests that a walk in the woods is a better bet. A series of studies published in

the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* revealed that people who were exposed to nature for as little as 20 minutes a day experienced elevated energy levels and better overall mood than those who were not.

4. IT MAKES YOU KINDER

A study by the University of Rochester found that when exposed to nature, people tend to feel more generous, more connected to their community and more socially conscious. Even simply looking at photos of nature reinforced feelings of connection with other living things, which in turn reminded people of basic values like generosity and caring.

5. IT STRENGTHENS YOUR SPIRITUALITY

There can be a deeply spiritual side to connecting with nature, helping provide us with a stronger sense of self. We may be part of a universe larger than we can imagine, but that doesn't mean we can't find comfort in the vast environment around us. Reconnect by doing something as simple as walking barefoot over a mossy forest floor or dipping your toes in the ocean.

About Canyon Ranch®

Canyon Ranch® has been a trailblazer and an industry-leading proponent of the wellness lifestyle and real estate living for nearly 40 years, operating the world's most celebrated collection of life-enhancement properties. Canyon Ranch has wellness destinations in Tucson, Arizona and Lenox, Massachusetts. In addition, Canyon Ranch operates the world's largest day spa at The Venetian® & The Palazzo® hotels in Las Vegas, Nevada and 22 Canyon Ranch at Sea® wellness facilities onboard luxury cruise lines: Cunard Cruise Line, Oceania® Cruises, Regent Seven Seas Cruises®, and on Celebrity Cruises®. Canyon Ranch is a 13-time winner of Travel + Leisure's Best Spa Award, an 11-time recipient of the Condé Nast Traveler Best Destination Spa Award, is honored by Town & Country as one of the 'Best Luxury Spas in the World' in their 2017 Spa Awards and is recognized as the 'Best Wellness Program' by Virtuoso's 'Best of the Best' 2017 awards.

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