



DID YOU KNOW?

Being in Nature Can Help Prevent and Manage Stress

Did you know that spending time outdoors and in nature can help us live healthier and longer lives? Nature can come in many forms, including parks, playgrounds, and gardens.

Being in nature and moving our bodies can make us feel good. It can also help calm our brain and body when stressful things happen in our lives.



Time in nature helps focus attention, manage behaviors and reactions, control impulses, and regulate our emotions.

Everyday Practices

Here are some everyday ways to be in nature to help prevent and lower stress:

- Create goals and plans for spending more time outside, meet up with family or friends to make it fun.
- Get outside with family, friends, or mentors (choose trees over television). Even just a walk around the block can make a difference.
- Create an obstacle course, jump rope, or draw hopscotch or four square with chalk.
- Go to a local playground, such as at a school or park, take a walk, have a picnic.
- Slow down and try to engage all of your senses. Smell flowers and plants, listen to the birds, touch different textures, like the bark of trees, and smooth and rough rocks.
- When children get to explore and play in natural settings, they can build confidence and self-awareness. See if there are after-school programs for kids nearby, such as through school, the YMCA, or a Boys & Girls Club. Often discounts are available.



Check out community programs that might be of interest on weekends or holidays:

- Local parks and recreation department
- Community gardens
- State and national parks
- Marine mammal centers, wildlife conservation organizations



Sometimes We Need *a Little* Extra Support

When you are feeling overwhelmed, these things can help:

- See if your county, local community center, or neighborhood family center has outdoor activities.
- Call or go online to your local 2-1-1 (www.211.org) to learn about places to go in your area.

Sometimes We Need *a Lot* of Extra Support

When you are going through an extra tough time:

- There are therapists who specialize in nature-based therapy. There are also programs, such as gardening therapy and adventure-based treatment programs (e.g., Gateway Mountain Center or Veteran Outdoor Alliance), that help build friendships and promote physical activity and mental health. Partner with your medical provider to find a therapist or program that fits your needs.



We know there are barriers to spending time outside, including transportation and feeling safe. Visit [ACESAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress) for a variety of resources.



aces aware
SCREEN. TREAT. HEAL.

FOR MORE WAYS TO MANAGE STRESS:

Visit [ACESAware.org/ManageStress](https://www.acesaware.org/ManageStress) or
Talk to your health care provider