

The benefits of being in nature

1. Experts say the **benefits of physical activity outweigh the risks** for people with long-term health conditions.

2. **Physical activity in natural environments is more beneficial** to health than other environments.

3. For any age, being active in nature is associated with **positive outcomes for mental health, stress, mood disorders and wellbeing.**

4. Increased exposure to green space and nature was **associated with slower cognitive decline, reduced risk of diabetes and obesity and increased physical activity.**

5. People who have regular contact with wilder, natural surroundings experienced:

- Improvements to health through **increased physical activity**
- **Reductions in stress and anxiety**
- **Increased positive mood and self-esteem**
- **A healthier social life.**

6. Exposure to forests is associated with **reduced blood pressure and heart rate.**

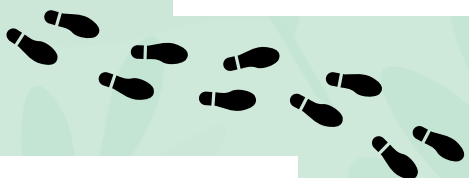
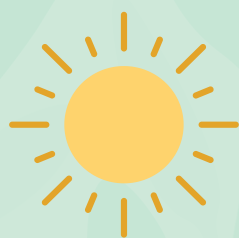
7. Gardening, when incorporated into therapeutic and mindfulness activities, can **improve mental wellbeing, physical activity and reduce social isolation.**

9. People with high nature connectedness are 1.7 times more likely to report their lives worthwhile.

People who visited nature at least once a week are 1.9 times more likely to report good health.

8. Nature based social prescribing interventions **connect those at greatest risk of health inequalities** to the wider community and in turn foster feelings of social connectedness, and decrease feelings of social isolation; positively impacting happiness and wellbeing.

10. People with cancer and increased exposure to **nature-based activities** had significantly improved aerobic fitness and psychological benefits.



This document has been produced by the Green Social Prescribing Project, a partnership between Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Wildlife Trust, with support from both local authorities.

Find out more at...

Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin: www.energizestw.org.uk

Shropshire Wildlife Trust: www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/local-greenspaces

The **National Association of Social Prescribing** outlines the benefits:

Nature-based social prescribing activities can positively impact happiness and well-being. This can be by reducing social isolation and developing a connection to nature, particularly in people who may be experiencing health inequalities. Both contact and connection with nature play a role in improving health and well-being outcomes. (11)

Visit: <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/>

Sources:

1. Statement November 2021 OHID, Sport England, Moving Medicine, Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine UK and Royal College of General Practitioners. <https://www.fsem.ac.uk/experts-say-benefits-of-physical-activity-outweigh-the-risks-for-people-with-long-term-health-conditions/>
2. Natural England Access to Evidence Information Note EIN019: Links between natural environments and physical activity: evidence briefing 2016.
3. and 6. Dr Helen Seers, Dr Rabya Mughal and Professor Helen Chatterjee, National Academy for Social Prescribing, UK. (2022) Links between natural environments and mental health. Natural England Evidence Information Note EIN065.
4. 7. and 8. Mughal R., Seers H., Polley M., Sabey A. & Chatterjee H.J. (2022) How the natural environment can support health and wellbeing through social prescribing. NASP.
5. A Natural Health Service. Prescribing nature works – and is excellent value for money. A summary of research carried out by University of Essex and Leeds Beckett University for The Wildlife Trusts.
9. Natural England. (2020) Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment. A summary report on nature connectedness among adults and children in England. Analyses of relationships with wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours.
10. Morris, S.L., Newhouse, I., Larocque, T., Gillis, K.J., Smith, L., & Nisbet, E.K. (2021). Becoming one with nature: a nature intervention for individuals living with cancer participating in a ten-week group exercise and wellness program. International Journal of Exercise Science, 14(3), 498. <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/ijes/vol14/iss3/8/>
11. National Association of Social Prescribing. Social Prescribing: the natural environment. <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/130ffjgd/appg-briefing-social-prescribing-and-health-evidence.pdf>