

# MINDFUL HEALTH ~ I WILL FOCUS ON ME

## Benefits of spending time in nature

Nature can make you happier, healthier and more relaxed. Trees, plants and blue skies decrease stress, improve mental well-being, benefit short-term memory, attention span and lower your risk for several chronic diseases including diabetes, heart attacks and cancer.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of time is spent indoors. We are constantly being stimulated with the increase in technology use and busy urban environments. Your body and brain do not get a rest – and when you are stressed, your levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, go up. A walk in nature has been shown to lower cortisol levels and also increase serotonin levels which can create a calmer you. Nature allows your brain to recover, restoring attention and creativity. Your body becomes more relaxed and revitalized. A daily walk in nature can also help positively manage depression and anxiety.

### Nature at home

Nature can be found right outside your door: in a local park or forest, a tree lined street or in your own backyard. Organizing a family walk to the park, playing tag with your kids in the backyard or planting a flower or vegetable garden are just a few ways to connect with nature at home.

### Nature at work

Workplaces with views of natural scenery or access to nature walks have been known to have happier, creative and present employees. Try walking with colleagues at lunch or conduct walk and talk meetings in nature. If you do not have nature nearby, try placing a few plants on your desk or having a poster of your favourite forest hung on your wall.

### Nature in every season

Enjoy the outdoors no matter what time of year. Each season has something to offer. After immersing yourself in nature, you will feel refreshed and more able to face the everyday challenges of life.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

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The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white star or spark icon above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a blue and purple geometric background.

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