



MAKE GETTING OUTSIDE PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE!

The neuroscience of brain resilience is complex and only partially understood. But scientific studies have proven that showing pictures of nature to a subject triggered an increase in the interactions of the pleasure receptors of the brain's visual cortex.

On the other hand, studies have also indicated that walking through a highly trafficked city street can increase the brain's production of cortisol by the adrenal glands, which can result in a weakened immune system, lower bone density, weight gain, high blood pressure and heart disease.

In fact, those who live in cities have a 20 percent higher risk of anxiety disorders and a 40 percent higher risk of mood disorders compared to people who live in rural areas. However, you don't have to actually live in nature to reap the benefits! If you are a city resident, here are a few tips for bringing nature to you.

Take a daily walk through a park or green space

Most cities have parks, green spaces or botanical gardens for residents to enjoy. Take advantage of that. On your lunch break from work or in the evening, take a 30-minute stroll through a natural area with green grass, plants and trees. Oklahoma City offers a variety of options to enjoy nature including the Myriad Botanical Gardens, Martin Park Nature Center and Lake Hefner.

Fill your space with natural light and plants

Many city dwellers spend most of their time indoors due to work. Make sure your living and working spaces provide natural sunlight and fill your area with live plants. Studies have indicated that having contact with plants in the office can reduce perceptions of stress and increase feelings of well-being. Another

study featured in Psychology Today found that natural light in a workplace improved sleep, activity and quality of life ratings.

Take vacations in natural settings

While many of us enjoy traveling to new cities during our time off, there are many benefits of unplugging and enjoying a vacation in a more remote area. Go to the beach or the mountains, try camping, a float trip, a ski trip, a visit to the lake or plan nature walks and hiking trips through nearby areas. Engaging in nature on your time off can help you reset and feel replenished before returning to city life.

Grow your own garden

Most of us already know gardening is a great way to exercise but spending time outside while you maintain a garden is good for the mind, too. When you're planting, raking, watering and harvesting, levels of serotonin and dopamine (the happy hormones that make us feel good) rise thanks to the exercise. Plus, looking after a garden keeps us connected to other living things, gives us a sense of responsibility and allows us to be nurturers.

To read the [full article](#), visit the INTEGRIS On Your Health blog.

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