



Think naturally: A guide to re-engage with nature

This week marks Mental Health Awareness week and the theme this year is nature. The Mental Health Foundation are encouraging us all to connect with nature to harness the psychological and physical health benefits.

Research suggests spending 120 minutes per week in nature has significant health benefits, including improved mental health, better focus, lower blood pressure and enhanced immunity.

Our nature spotting wellbeing worksheet is a fun way for you to track your time in nature and make the experience more mindful and meaningful. By the end of the week you will be able to see how nature has impacted your health in a positive way.



Start of the week reflection

Score your overall wellbeing (scale between 1-10, with 1 being very poor and 10 being excellent)

On average how much time do you spend in nature?

Parks



Hours

Mins

Fields



Hours

Mins

Woods/Forest



Hours

Mins

Other natural environments



Hours

Mins

Total



Hours

Mins



Activity one: How green is your workspace?

Which of the following do you currently have access to from your work space?

- A window with views of nature
- Sounds of nature (birdsong, water, crickets etc.)
- Scents of nature (essential oils, flowers, fragrant plants etc.)
- Plants (anything from herbs on a windowsill to a balcony or roof terrace)
- Other (please specify below)

How could you make your work space greener? What small changes could you implement to add more nature?



Activity two: Mindfulness in nature

Make a commitment this week to explore a new green space. Be mindful and notice how your senses change when you are in nature and note down the following:

What do you see?



What do you hear?



What can you smell?



What can you touch?





Activity three: Discover nature

Spend time this week learning more about the nature around you. Look out for the plants, animals, sounds, smells and textures you encounter as you explore. You could download a nature spotting app, such as Seek*, to your phone. They're often free and enable you to use your camera to identify new plants and animals and you can participate in monthly observation challenges.

Note down what new things you have learned this week about nature.

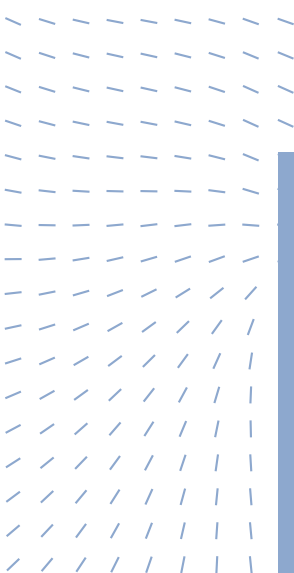


Activity four: Natural breaks

Try taking a break at lunch this week and go out in nature, eat lunch in the garden or go for a walk. Notice how you feel and if your mood is impacted positively. Breaks are great for your health and wellbeing and time in nature can really boost the benefits further.

If you work in a truly urban space, take some time to explore images of your favourite natural spaces and incorporate these into your workspace. Research shows that even looking at images of nature can have health benefits.

How did your break in nature impact your mood?



*https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app



Activity five: Share nature

Organise fun nature filled activities with colleagues or friends to share the benefits with others. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- ♦ Start a walking group
- ♦ Host a nature spotting group (with a fun prize for the best 'spots')
- ♦ Plan mindful nature walks (focusing on either the sights or sounds of nature)
- ♦ Create a nature-based creativity project
- ♦ Schedule a plant or cutting swap event
- ♦ Propose a plant growing competition
- ♦ Host a community dog walk.

What new event are you going to suggest with friends, family or colleagues:



Your reflections

Following your week in nature we want you to reflect on the impact it's had on your emotional and physically wellbeing.

Score your overall wellbeing (scale between 1-10, with 1 being very poor and 10 being excellent)

How much time did you spend in nature?

What have you learned this week by spending more time in nature?

What new ideas will you carry forward to spend more time in nature?



Observations

A large, empty white rectangular area framed by a light blue border, intended for taking observations.



For more advice and support with your emotional wellbeing,
visit nuffieldhealth.com/article/wellbeing-at-work

