

## Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing

Connecting with nature has been shown to improve our mental, physical and emotional health, and help us feel more connected to ourselves and others. Nature connection can also decrease stress, which may be important because stress can affect healing, as well as our overall health.

In addition, nature-based interventions can result in improved diastolic blood pressure and heart rate for people with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions, which is important because heart rate and diastolic blood pressure influence the risk of cardiovascular disease<sup>1</sup>. We are including nature connections in your care to help with your stress, pain, keep you active, and improve your healing.

### Indoor Connections

- Listen to a nature meditation (<https://www.natureforhealing.org/how-to-connect-with-nature-1>).
- Listen to nature sounds and take 10 deep breaths.
- Find a window and connect with the outdoor world through activities such as looking for 5 different aspects of nature, notice the weather, look for cloud sculptures, look for animals, etc.
- Looking out a window, notice how far you can see and how that changes day to day. Imagine you are an eagle soaring through the sky – where would you go? What do you think would catch your eye?
- Get a pencil and paper. Look out the window and without looking at your paper, trace what you are seeing. It is not about what you draw but how you feel as you are doing it!
- Read a book that connects you with land & nature (suggestions on our website -- all ages).
- Look at pictures of plants or animals. Imagine you are with them; what would you say to them?
- Care for an indoor plant – take time every day to see what it needs and how it is growing, perhaps even give it a name.
- If you are exercising indoors, position yourself so you can see nature through paintings or images, a window-view, a real or fake plant.
- Keep a nature journal.
- Make nature art, whether it is writing, drawing, singing, dancing, or music.

### Your Feedback is Important!

To help support our program, please give us feedback and suggestions based on your experience:

<https://www.natureforhealing.org/surveys>



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## **Outdoor Connections**

We invite all patients and caregivers to discuss whether & when it is safe or feasible for an in-patient to go outside with their healthcare team. Regardless, we encourage all families and caregivers to ensure they are taking moments to connect outdoors when they can.

Below are a few suggestions about how you can be intentional about your time outdoors. You can find more ideas and a map of places to experience nature indoors & outside on our website.

- Unstructured play or wander outdoors
- Sit outside and feel the air on your cheeks and smile!
- Take a ten-minute walk outdoors. Try and touch at least 3 different plants on your walk.
- Put your hands on the ground and feel the Earth.
- Go outside; use each of your 5 senses to experience nature.
  - Reflect on 5 things seen in nature.
  - Reflect on 4 textures felt in nature.
  - Reflect on 3 sounds heard in nature.
  - Reflect on 2 smells experienced in nature.
  - Reflect on 1 air tasted in nature.
- If you sit outside with someone who makes you feel **safe** and see someone you think looks **friendly and safe**, smile and wave at them!
- Find a tree and give it a hug or sit under it with your back touching the trunk.
- Try to figure out which way the wind is blowing.
- Do your exercises outside, somewhere you feel safe and that gives you the privacy you need. You can always bring a friend!
- Find a favourite tree and notice it/sketch it every month, or two, (or three 😊) and notice if it changes at different times of the year.
- Take your camera and find something beautiful. Please share it with us (if you would like to) as we'd love to share it with others!
- If you are on the hospital grounds and you see something in nature that you love whether it be a plant, insect, animal, or tree, let us know\* so we can share it with the rest of our community.

### **Learn More:**

Check out our website for more resources:



### **Share With Us!**

\*If you have an experience or take a photo that you want to share with us, please don't hesitate to share in whichever way you feel most comfortable connecting.

**Email us:** [chehc@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:chehc@lhsc.on.ca)

**Message us on Instagram:** @chehc\_on

**Via our website:** <https://www.natureforhealing.org/contact-us>

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<sup>i</sup> Struthers, N. A., Guluzade, N. A., Zecevic, A. A., Walton, D. M., & Gunz, A. (2024). Nature-based interventions for physical health conditions: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Environmental Research*, 258, 119421-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2024.119421>