

Metroparks RX for Vitamin N



Kim High, Metroparks Master Interpreter and Certified Forest Therapy Guide for the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, Guides & Programs

You and your family don't have to be in the wilderness or even a Metropark to gain the healing benefits of Nature Therapy. Active, present-tense use of your senses as well as your intuition, playfulness and imagination can supercharge your connection and sense of wonder to nature, even in your yard or adapted to private indoor space with natural sounds, images, plants and rocks.

Try this Vitamin N (nature) prescription to boost your mood, maintain healthy heart and blood pressure, lower stress, and support sleep:

RX: One or more of these invitations, about thirty minutes, 3 times per week

TIPS FOR SUCCESS FOR ALL INVITATIONS:

- When you feel your mind distracting you towards worries or tasks, come back to the invitation at hand, be with it fully, in the present tense, and give it more time.
- These invitations are recommended to be solo, without talking to other participants. When finished with each invitation, it is optional to share briefly what you were noticing about that invitation with family members who are participating in them with you. Share with short expressions, while the listeners simply bears witness quietly, rather than making dialogue. Then continue to the next invitation.
- Don't let the words of the invitation stifle you; you and your family can modify them to whatever works!
- For more information, contact Kim High at Metroparks Toledo, 419-467-8291, or visit the ANFT website at www.natureandforesttherapy.org

INVITATIONS:

Let Nature Hold Your Worries

Find a small rock, stone, nut or unattached natural object that draws your attention. Clasp it in your hands for a moment, and silently ask it to hold whatever worries or concerns you might have that are distracting you. Put it in a special place, and continue with one, two or more other nature therapy invitations below. At the end of your nature therapy adventure, come back to your chosen object, and thank it for holding your thoughts.



What's Happening Around Me in Nature?

Step outside, into your yard or outdoor space, and wander silently, slowly, at a snail's pace — for about 20 minutes. Use whichever senses feel right as you inch your way along, and continuously ask yourself, "What's happening, right here and right now?" A modification might be to stay sitting in one place while you ask this question, experiencing everything around you.



If Trees and Plants Could Talk

Wander until you come to a tree or plant that draws your attention. (If you can't get outside, this can be a house plant.) Greet it, as if it's a new friend, and get to know it, visiting with it in your own way, for 15 minutes or so. If it could talk, what would it be saying to you, and what are you sharing with it?



(continued on back)

Playing Mirror

Wander until a natural being (plant, animal, rock, etc....) calls your attention. Spend a minute or two just watching and experiencing it, and then play 'mirror' with it, moving the way it moves, or shaping yourself the way it is shaped. Allow yourself about 15 minutes to play mirror — experiencing several beings in this time, or enjoying a longer game with just one or two. (Squirrels offer great companions for "Playing Mirror!")



Water Gaze

Wander for 10 to 15 minutes to the edges of garden ponds, bird baths, puddles, or other water sources, and simply gaze at the water for a while. Notice what it has to offer. If it feels right, offer something back to the water.



Best Wishes

Walk without speaking for about 15 minutes, noticing the beings that draw your attention. Wonder about their needs and, if it feels right, offer them some best wishes.



Hear Colors Here

Find a comfortable resting place and position. With eyes closed for about ten minutes, rest and listen. What colors come to you as you hear different sounds around you?



Treetop Life

Lie, sit or rest in a comfortable place to spend 15 minutes or so watching treetops. What are you noticing in the treetops? How do you feel as you watch?



Mapping Beings of your Heart

Find a comfortable place to sit. Loosely determine directions of north, south east and west. Starting from your heart space, notice any present beings that are bringing you joy and send an imaginary line from your heart to them in their direction. After trying this for a minute or so, close your eyes and consider beings, both human and nonhuman, that play or have played joyous parts in your life. Which direction on your map are (or were) they from you? How far away, compared to the other beings you have mapped? Send imaginary lines to their locations too, and messages of gratitude if that feels right. Spend as long or as little as you like with each.



**METROPARKS
TOLEDO**