

Forest Bathing

Immerse yourself in Nature Therapy for improved health and wellbeing.



Age: All

Time: 20 – 60 minutes

The Japanese practice of Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing) is a relaxation activity to help calm modern-day stress: Immerse yourself in nature, then Hush...No rush...Move slowly...Think gently.

Here's How:

1. Leave your fast-paced life in the parking lot! **Slowly walk through the Arboretum to find a place that is comfortable for sitting**—a bench, log, or boulder—and where nature surrounds you.
 - Although you may be with others, avoid talking and using your cell phone.
2. Quietly and leisurely **ponder what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel**, one sense at a time for at least a few minutes each sense, as you sit.
 - When you notice something that interests you, focus your attention on it and be curious about it.
3. When finished, **consider how you feel**, then take a few deep breaths, breathing out more slowly than breathing in.
4. For the greatest benefits, practice Shinrin-Yoku often.

The Back Story:

Nature Therapy involves exposure to natural stimuli for the purpose of achieving physiological and psychological relaxation and boosting

weakened immune functions to prevent diseases. Forests provide restorative effects because of higher oxygen levels and chemicals—phytoncides and terpenes—that trees emit.

Phytoncides and terpenes are volatile organic compounds (VOCs, i.e., essential oils) released by trees and other green plants that naturally defend the plants from harmful bacteria, insects, and fungi. Trees known to produce especially high levels of phytoncides include evergreens such as cedars, spruces, firs, and pines.

There are thousands of phytoncides, many of which are beneficial to humans when inhaled. Some of the most common phytoncides are alpha-pinene (fresh piney scent), d-limonene (smells lemony), beta-pinene (herby smell), and camphene (smells like turpentine).

Shinrin-Yoku (forest bathing) is a type of Nature Therapy used in Japanese medicine that involves immersing oneself in nature and mindfully using all senses. Shinrin-Yoku has therapeutic effects on bodily systems, depression and anxiety, and feelings of “awe” (increase in gratitude and selflessness). Spending time in forests contributes to lower rates of cancers and lower human stress hormones.