

No matter who you are or where you are, take time to care for yourself by taking deep breaths, being still, and noticing what is around you.

Discover ways to connect to nature and find moments of peace and relaxation, especially during times of uncertainty.

These exercises can be completed anywhere—from your window, while looking at a beautiful image of nature, in your yard, on your porch, on a walk in your neighborhood, or in a park nearby.

Step One: Read through the prompts below and select one that speaks to you.

- Find a place where you have a view of nature. Be still.
- Find a comfortable place and be still. Look around and listen, but don't name what's making the sound. Observe without judging.
- Look around and find something that catches your eye. Why did you pick it?
- Pick up a natural object (pinecone, rock, leaf, etc.). What colors do you see? What does it smell like? What does it feel like (rough, smooth, heavy, light)? What does it sound like?
- Walk around and concentrate on everything you see for five minutes. Switch to concentrating on everything you hear. Switch between your senses and see how it alters your experience.
- Find an online meditation. Look out a window while you listen.
- Find a place where you can sit comfortably. Look up and pause, look down and pause. Look side to side and pause. Did it feel different pausing in different directions?
- Look up at the clouds. Do you see a shape? Make up a story about what you see.
- Find a comfortable position and relax every muscle in your body starting at your head and working down to your feet.
- Focus on a small area. Close your eyes and see if you can remember everything, as if it was a painting.
- Recall a memory of spending time in outdoor places with family or friends. How would you describe the place? What were you doing? How did you feel?

Step Two: Begin each exercise with deep breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five, pause for a moment and then breathe out on this same count. *This helps our minds to relax.*

Step Three: Take your time to complete the prompt you chose from above. You can practice as many prompts per day as you'd like. The choice is yours.

Step Four: End each exercise by looking around and saying thank you to everything that is around you. Remember to take this time to thank yourself. You can also journal and reflect on the experience, or just be still for a few extra moments.

More ways to be mindful and connect:

- Connect to nature virtually through live webcams: <https://www.explore.org/livecams>
- Explore virtual engagements through Forest Bathing International: <https://www.forestbathinginternational.org>
- Certified Forest Therapy Guide-Sandi Dallaba: <https://www.pittsburghforestbathing.org/>

WHY MINDFUL MOMENTS?

"Anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues can all be eased by some time in the great outdoors — especially when that's combined with exercise."
- Journal of Affective Disorders, 2013

"Nature attracts one's attention, providing the opportunity for recovery from mental fatigue."
-Hartig and Evans, 1993

"Spending just 20 minutes connecting with nature can help lower stress levels." -Frontiers in Psychology, 2019