



CHAMPION  
HEALTH

# Boosting your wellbeing with nature

A Champion Health Guide

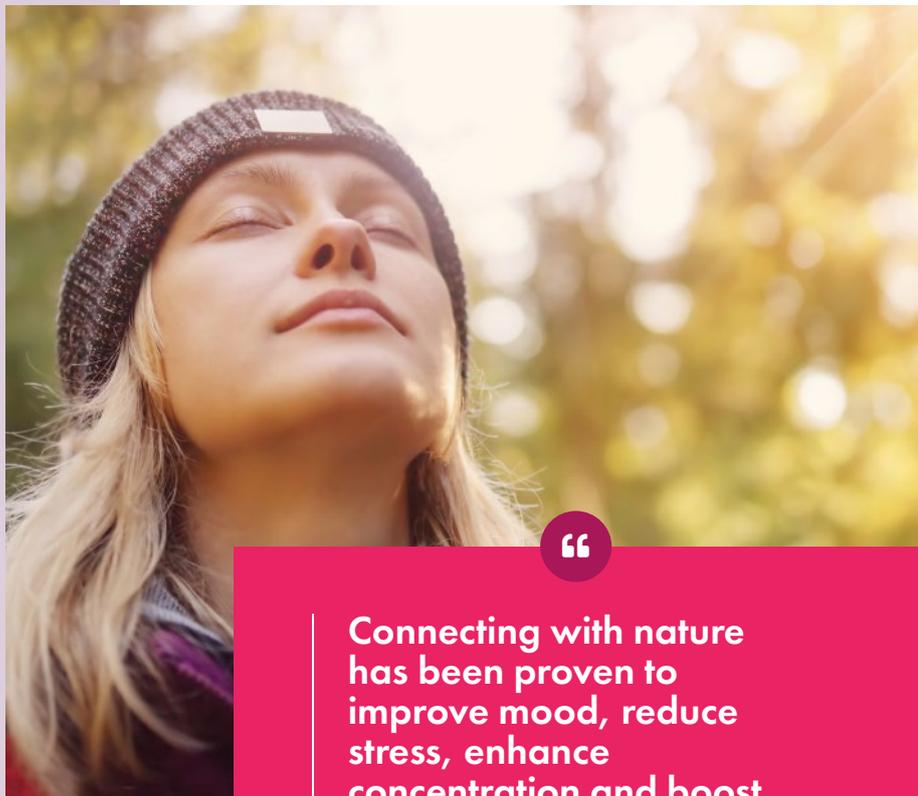
# Nature and our mental health

Nature is our most accessible wellbeing resource. It's all around us, it's extremely effective, and best of all, it's free.

The mental health benefits of connecting with nature are wide-ranging and powerful. Among other things, it has been proven to improve mood, reduce stress, enhance concentration and boost self-esteem.

Spending time outside is also associated with wellbeing benefits beyond mental health as well, such as a more active lifestyle and boosted levels of Vitamin D.

So, to help you utilise your most accessible wellbeing resource, we are sharing our top 10 actionable ways that you (and your team) can connect with nature.



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**Connecting with nature has been proven to improve mood, reduce stress, enhance concentration and boost self-esteem.**



Spending time outside will help you to find that “get up and go”.

## Find your “get up and go”

Connecting with nature simply starts with getting out of your chair and leaving the house.

Whether it's for a short walk, a jog, or even just to sit down for a while, schedule in some minutes to spend outside.

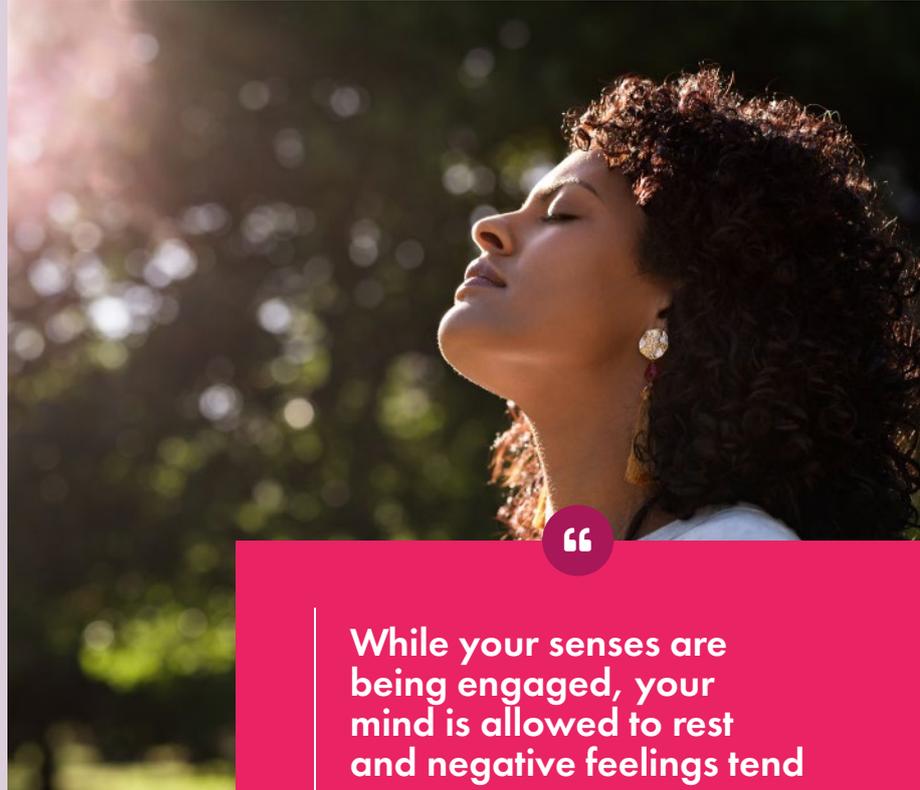
Spending time outside will also help you to find that “get up and go”.

## Engage your senses

It's not just about being in nature, but how you interact with it that counts.

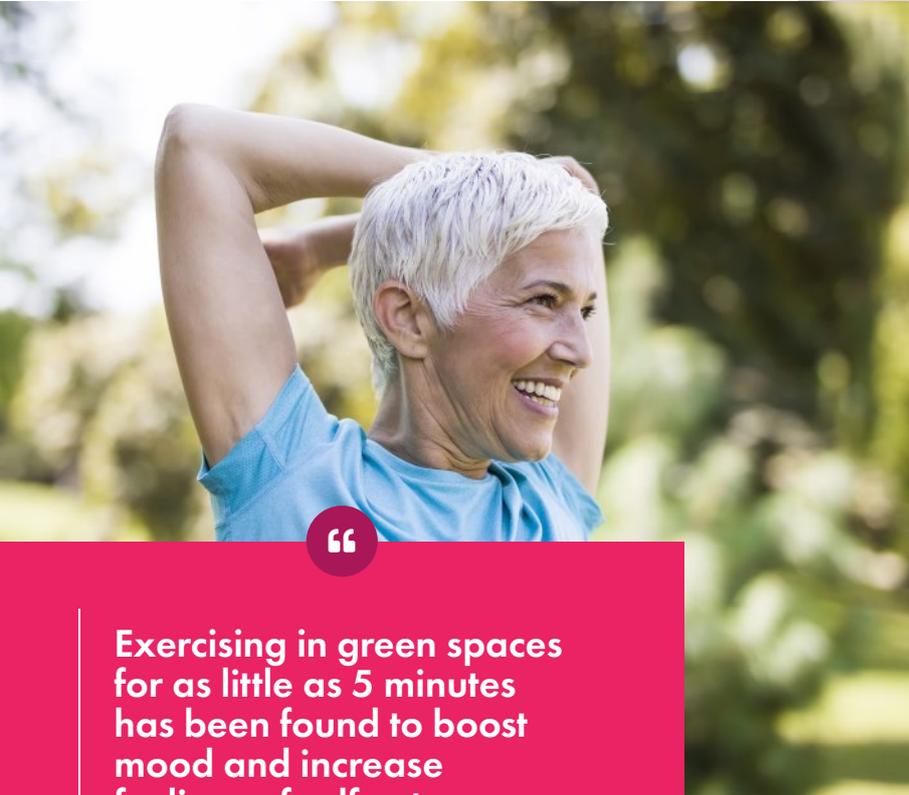
When you're out and about, allow the experience of nature to wash over you. Listen to the birds, watch the swaying of the trees, and take in the scent of the grass.

Engaging your senses like this allows for 'soft stimulation' of the mind. While your senses are being engaged, your mind is allowed to rest and negative feelings tend to ease.



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**Exercising in green spaces for as little as 5 minutes has been found to boost mood and increase feelings of self-esteem.**

## **Exercise outdoors**

If possible, try to exercise outside rather than inside the house.

Exercising in green spaces for as little as 5 minutes has been found to boost mood and increase feelings of self-esteem.

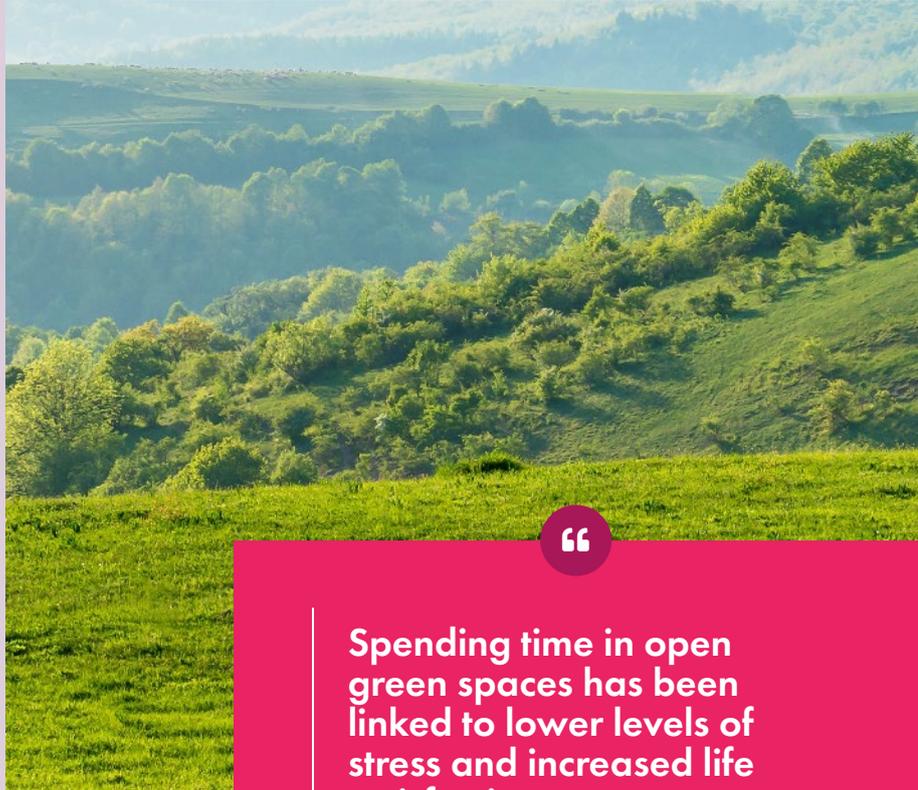
By exercising outside, you can enjoy the benefits of physical activity while soaking up sunlight and connecting with nature. It's a win-win-win!

## Keep on the grass

Enjoy the green grass of the great outdoors.

Spending time in open green spaces has been linked to lower levels of stress and increased life satisfaction.

So, on your next lunch break, swap the four walls of your workspace for a walk on the grass.



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**Gardening has been found to reduce stress, boost self-esteem and improve quality of life.**

## Get out in the garden

If you're lucky enough to have a garden, make the most of it by getting your gardening gloves on!

Gardening has been found to reduce stress, boost self-esteem and improve overall quality of life.

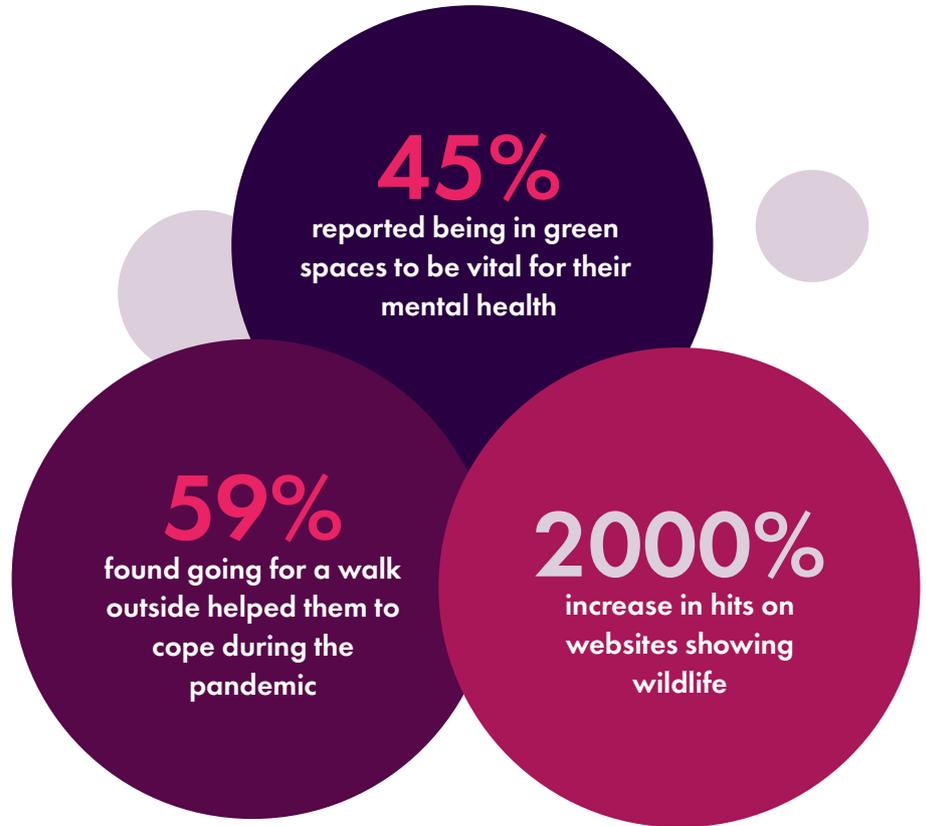
You don't even need outside space to do some gardening. All you need is a sunny windowsill, some multipurpose compost and some seeds.

## Case Study: COVID -19

During COVID-19, millions of us turned to nature to support our wellbeing.

This is reflected in data released by the Mental Health Foundation, which found that two thirds of individuals used daily walks as a coping strategy during lockdown.

Research also showed that people were noticing and appreciating nature more than they were previously, contributing to higher levels of wellbeing.



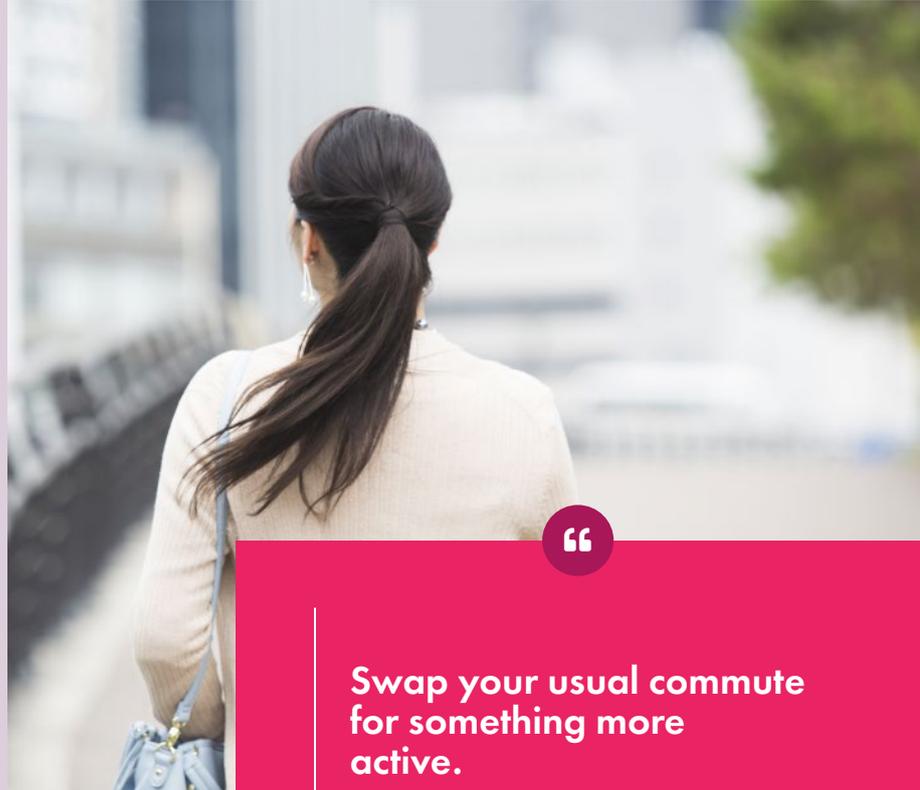
(Mental Health  
Foundation, 2021)

## Implement an active commute

If you're lucky enough to live within walking or cycling distance of work, swap your usual commute for something more active.

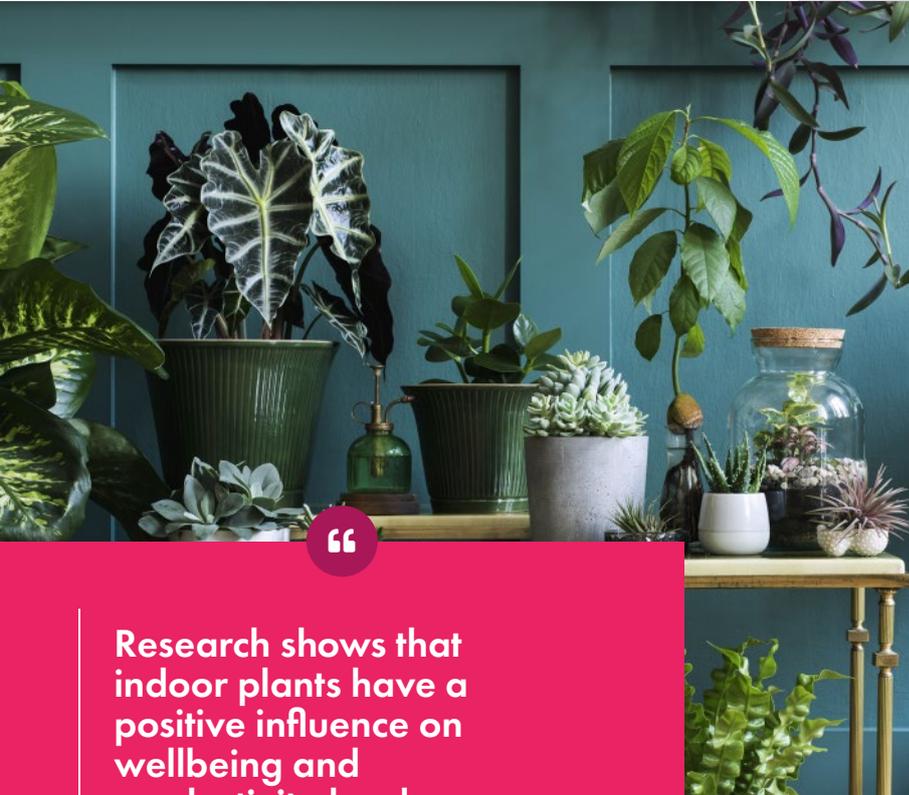
If you live further away, you can still enjoy an active commute. Try getting off the bus a few stops earlier or take a 5-minute walking detour between the car park and your workplace.

If you are a remote worker, create a "working from home commute" by going for a short walk at the beginning and end of the day.



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Research shows that indoor plants have a positive influence on wellbeing and productivity levels.

## Bring nature to you

Not everyone has easy access to open green spaces, but that shouldn't stop you from connecting with nature.

Bring nature to you by introducing some house plants into your home or workspace.

Research shows that indoor plants have a positive influence on wellbeing and productivity levels, particularly at work.

## Interact with wildlife

Being around animals and wildlife has been proven to be beneficial for overall wellbeing.

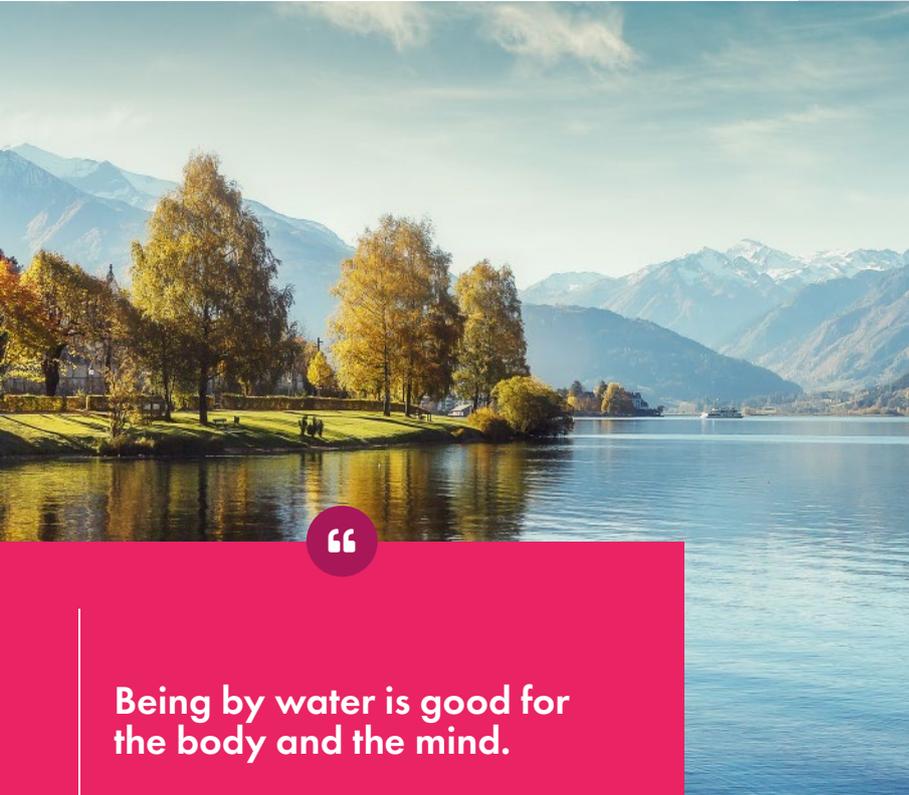
This could be as simple as watching the birds from your window, looking out for the bees or taking part in community research (like the Big Butterfly Count).

If you can't see any wildlife, try to listen out for them instead.



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**Being by water is good for the body and the mind.**

## **Walk by water**

Next time you go for a walk, try and incorporate some time by water.

As humans, we're naturally drawn to blue space.

Being by water is good for the body and the mind. It has been associated with many positive measures of wellbeing, from psychological restoration to better social relations.

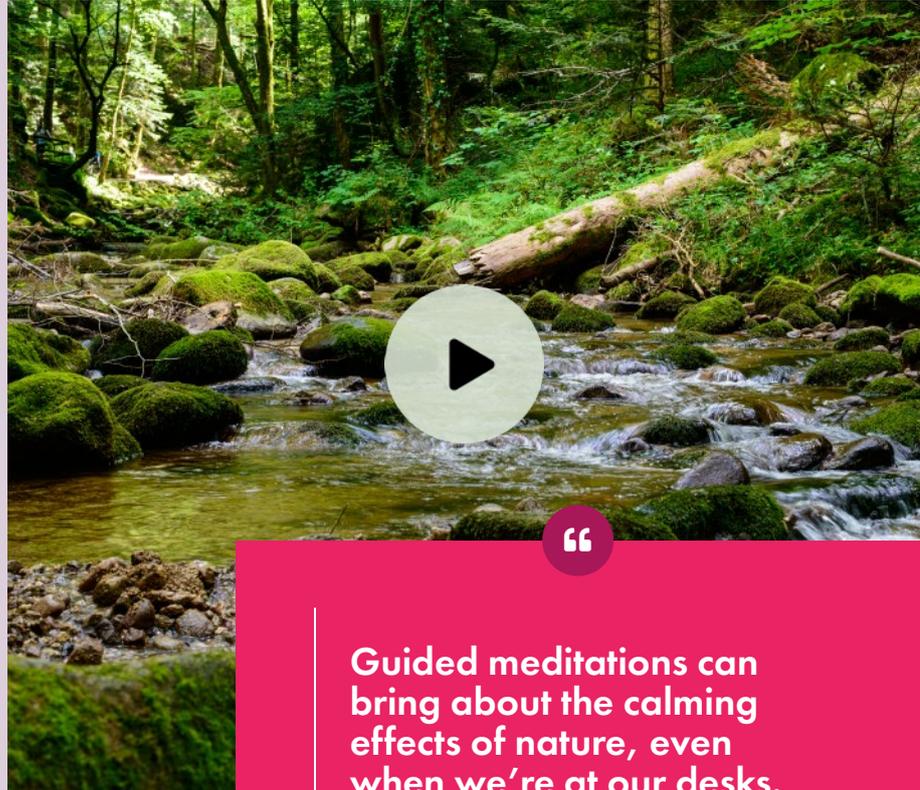
## Practice guided imagery

Our mind is a powerful tool, and guided meditations can bring about the calming effects of nature even when we're at our desks.

This is what guided imagery is all about: finding a moment of calm, exploring our imagination and tapping into our senses, which can bring a deep sense of relaxation.

You can listen to one of our guided imagery exercises here.

This meditation guides you through a peaceful meadow, which will help you to immerse yourself in nature and the relaxation it can bring.



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**Guided meditations can bring about the calming effects of nature, even when we're at our desks.**

**“Nature is our great untapped resource for a mentally healthy future.”** (Mental Health Foundation)

It is clear from the research that our wellbeing thrives when we're close to nature and tapping into this resource will be vital to ensure a mentally healthy future.

Luckily, nature is the easiest, cheapest and most accessible resource around us. So, let's make the most of it.

## Resources used to develop this guide

 [ACS Publications](#)

 [Mental Health Foundation](#)

 [Science Daily](#)

 [Thrive](#)

 [WWF](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope you found it useful! If you would like to request a specific workplace guide, please do get in touch. You'll find us at:

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