

Hike a day keeps the doctor away? Spending time in nature could reduce need for anxiety and blood pressure medications, study suggests

Spending time outside with trees, water and everything else nature has to offer, may reduce the need for anxiety drugs and other medications, according to a new study.

Researchers found enjoying nature up to four times a week reduced the odds of using mental health medications by 33%, [according to the study](#) published [January 16] in the journal Occupational & Environmental Medicine.

The study found spending time in green spaces, which include forests and gardens, as well as blue spaces, which include lakes and oceans, also cut the odds of using blood pressure pills by 36% and asthma medications by 26%.

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"Physical activity is thought to be the key mediating factor in the health benefits of green spaces when availability or active use of green space are considered," study coauthor Ann Turunen, a senior researcher at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki, said in a statement.

"The analysis can [reveal key associations](#), but we can't say for certain whether it was the greenspace proximity or use that led to reduced use of medications," said Lincoln Larson, an associate professor in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University.

"Perhaps people who were healthier to begin with were more likely to get outdoors in the first place," Larson added.

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