



# Press In Print

News and information from the President's Office  
assembled by Dale Galusha and Gina Duncan

## *Green Exercise, Discover the Powerful Combination of Nature and Activity*

by Sandi Schwartz—Vibrant Life Magazine, March/April 2022



### **What Is Green Exercise?**

Green exercise is a term used to describe our interaction with nature while engaging in a physical fitness activity. It was coined by Jules Pretty, PhD, and Jo Barton, PhD, at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. Their focus on this topic spurred a great deal of research into how the combination of nature and exercise can benefit emotional well-being.

Over the years, Carton and Pretty have published dozens of studies on the benefits of green exercise. They have shown that exercising in green spaces—whether in a city or in the wilderness—has a positive effect on mood. They also discovered that the effect of exercising near a body of water has an even greater impact on improving mood. Additional researchers from a wide background (including physiology, health and well-being, environmental sustainability,

community engagement, and behavior change) continue to study the link between nature, exercise, and mental health. This groundbreaking work can help all of us find ways to feel happier and calmer by doing something as simple as going for a walk outside.

### **How Green Exercise Lowers Stress and Anxiety**

Experts have found a clear link between exercise and stress reduction, and between nature and stress reduction. So when you combine exercise and nature, you get a double dose of wellness! In fact, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, consistent exercise can be as effective as medication for some people to reduce symptoms of anxiety. Other research shows that physically active people have lower rates of anxiety than those who do not exercise.

Here are several ways green exercise helps reduce stress and anxiety:

- **It produces endorphins**

When we exercise, our body releases feel-good neurotransmitters called endorphins. These chemicals in our brain act as natural painkillers, making us feel better and less stressed. Endorphins are responsible for the natural high we get from a hard workout.

- **It reduces stress hormones**

Exercising in nature helps you feel calmer because it reduces your body's level of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol.

- **It reduces fatigue**

Exercise improves your blood flow and your body's ability to use oxygen efficiently. These changes reduce fatigue and improve alertness. This is especially helpful when you feel stressed and depleted and need to return to a more balanced level of energy.

- **It provides a pleasant distraction**

One of the best parts about exercising while spending time in nature is that the experience offers a fun break from the pressures of daily lives. Just changing your scenery and environment can lift some of the stress that surrounds you at work or home.

- **It encourages you to be present**

While you work out, you can fully engage in the present moment instead of letting your mind run wild with worries about the past or the future. When you combine viewing nature with working out, you can get lost in the moment and experience a happiness boost.

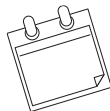
*Read the full article in the March/April 2022 issue of **Vibrant Life***

## ***From Your HR Department***



### **Deadline... Tracking Your Wellness Points!**

Accelerate plan members—You have until July 31, 2022, to track 10,000 wellness points to qualify for the Accelerate Plan in 2023. You can log previous points back seven days on your phone and 14 days on a personal computer. Log on to [ascendtowholeness.org](https://ascendtowholeness.org) and click –Healthcare–Wellness Portal–Login, points, assessment, and check the points tracker—You can even download the app for easy tracking. If you have trouble navigating the new platform, visit <https://virginpulse.zendesk.com/hc/en-us> or ask Kelly Lewis in HR.



### ***Dateline***

#### **April 2022**

20 PAYDAY

#### **May 2022**

4 PAYDAY

18 PAYDAY

30 PPPA Holiday—Memorial Day