



# Nature and well-being

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16.11.2021

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# Nature improves our physical health

For example, we heal faster from surgery and need less painkillers, if we can see a forest from hospital window.

## Nature literally heals!

Ulrich, R. S. (1984) View through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science*, 224, 420–421.



## Exposure to nature:

- Reduces blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension...
- Increase immunity against diseases (de Vries et al, 2003)
- Nature protects from coronary heart disease, asthma, migraine and diabetes... Rate of 15 diseases out of 24 was lower in living environments with more green space in 1km radius (Maas et al., 2009)



# Nature improves our mental health

For example, green spaces near schools promote cognitive development in children and green views near children's homes promote self-control behaviors.

Schertz, K. E., & Berman, M. G. (2019). Understanding Nature and Its Cognitive Benefits. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 28(5), 496–502.



## Exposure to nature:

- Increases happiness, subjective well-being, positive affect, positive social interactions and a sense of meaning and purpose in life - [Bratman et al \(2019\)](#). [Nature and mental health: An ecosystem service perspective. \*Science advances\*, 5\(7\)](#)
- Decreases in mental distress, anger, fear, stress, depression, anxiety...

# 15 min

In the forest reduces cortisol **13,4%**  
sitting down, **15,8%** walking (Park et al, 2009)

**thl**

\* thl



## How much time in nature is enough?

- People who spend at least two hours per week in nature reported significantly greater health and well-being. - [White et al \(2019\)](#). Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. *Sci Rep* 9, 7730
- Walking only 9km in a week reduces heart disease by 31% and mortality 32%





thl

\* thl





## Nature relationship?

- Environmental attitudes are important because they often, but not always, determine behaviour
- Environmental education aims to improve environmental attitudes, but has mixed results – [The Oxford Handbook of Environmental and Conservation Psychology \(2012\)](#)
- There is no need to have a “nature relationship” for nature health benefits
- However, having a positive nature relationship and having pro-environmental attitudes increases the nature health benefits ([e.g. Salonen K., 2020](#))



**Health equity =  
everyone has a fair and  
just opportunity to be as  
healthy as possible**

**thl**



**thl**

# Migrant population health studies in Finland

- 4 migrant population health studies have been conducted in Finland over the last ten years

## MAAMU



## UTH



## TERTTU



## FinMonik





## Reducing health inequalities

- Health inequalities result from social inequalities. Therefore action across all the social determinants of health is required.
- The main focus of the promotion of health equity is on preventable health inequalities, many which are due to living conditions and lifestyle factors
- **Nature is free!**





thl



thl