

Get Outdoors



Most people believe that time immersed in the natural world is essential to the healthy functioning of our minds and bodies. Now a raft of research proves that time out in nature is essential to our physical, psychological health and wellbeing too.



Benefits

- This activity can be really simple. Something as straight forwards as a cup of tea or coffee enjoyed outdoors in the fresh air has many benefits.
- What we listen to has a huge impact on our health and wellbeing. Studies reveal the benefits of natural sound, as well as silence. An example is that humans find bird song reassuring.

Things to remember

- Ensure that service users are suitably dressed for the weather.
- Make sure your garden is season-ready too. In the summer ensure there is shaded seating area. In autumn and spring it may be useful to have piles of blankets to hand to avoid chills.



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How to

What you will need

- An open door! This encourages service users to venture outside far more than if the door is closed.
- Make sure your outdoor space is safe for all users. Remove any trip hazards or uneven surfaces.
- Consider having a coat stand laden with coats, fleeces and hats to enable service users to go outside at a moments notice.



- Our sense of smell is closely linked to the parts of the brain responsible for processing emotion. Trees and plants emit phytoncides, inhaling these compounds slows down breathing and reduces anxiety.
- Take a stroll around the garden, stopping to smell the various flowers, shrubs and herbs. Fragrance can also evoke memories of the past and stimulate conversation.
- Many people enjoy watching wildlife in the garden. What could be easier than sitting outdoors watching the birds flock to a well stocked bird table? Try making our simple bird feeder to attract the birds to your outdoor space.
- Use outdoor spaces as an extension of your indoor space: A patio, gazebo or summerhouse can provide shelter for outdoor activities during the hotter and colder months, and extend your outdoor activity spaces at any time of the year.
- Try conducting indoor activities in the garden. Playing dominoes, cards or chess, reading the newspaper or a book, even just chatting can all be done outdoors and service users reap the benefits of the sounds and smells of nature.
- Why not take the radio outside and listen in the garden, rather than indoors?
- Play board games outdoors - who can resist a game of Monopoly?!!
- Serve lunch outdoors, perhaps take a picnic lunch outside rather than sitting in a dining room, or consider serving a barbecue in the summer.
- Do some chair based exercise outside, rather than indoors in a communal area.

To find out more visit: www.ltl.org.uk
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