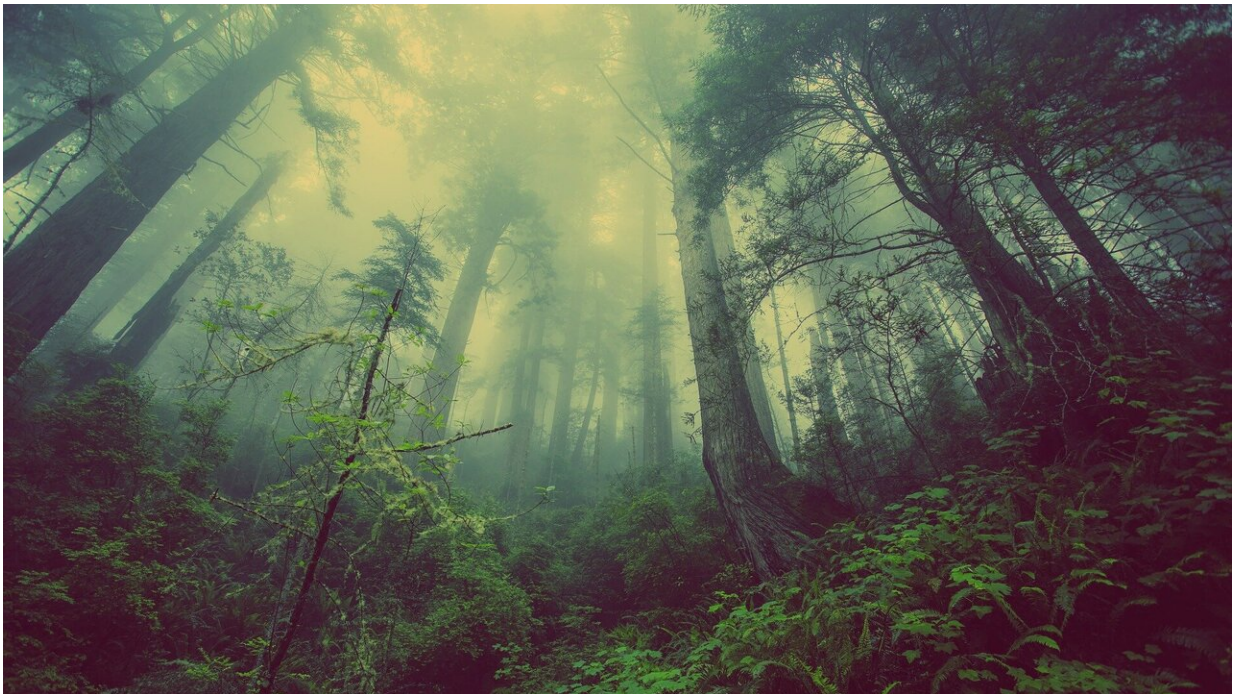


Two hours a week is key dose of nature for health and wellbeing

June 13 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Spending at least two hours a week in nature may be a crucial threshold for promoting health and wellbeing, according to a new large-scale study.

Research led by the University of Exeter, published in *Scientific Reports* and funded by NIHR, found that people who spend at least 120 minutes

in nature a week are significantly more likely to report good [health](#) and higher psychological [wellbeing](#) than those who don't visit nature at all during an average week. However, no such benefits were found for people who visited [natural](#) settings such as town parks, woodlands, country parks and beaches for less than 120 minutes a week.

The study used data from nearly 20,000 people in England and found that it didn't matter whether the 120 minutes was achieved in a single visit or over several shorter visits. It also found the 120 minute threshold applied to both men and women, to older and [younger adults](#), across different occupational and [ethnic groups](#), among those living in both rich and poor areas, and even among people with long term illnesses or disabilities.

Dr. Mat White, of the University of Exeter Medical School, who led the study, said: "It's well known that getting outdoors in nature can be good for people's health and wellbeing but until now we've not been able to say how much is enough. The majority of nature visits in this research took place within just two miles of home so even visiting local urban greenspaces seems to be a good thing. Two hours a week is hopefully a realistic target for many people, especially given that it can be spread over an entire week to get the benefit."

There is growing evidence that merely living in a greener neighbourhood can be good for health, for instance by reducing air pollution. The data for the current research came from Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey, the world's largest study collecting data on people's weekly contact with the [natural world](#).

Co-author of the research, Professor Terry Hartig of Uppsala University in Sweden said: "There are many reasons why spending time in nature may be good for health and wellbeing, including getting perspective on life circumstances, reducing stress, and enjoying quality time with

friends and family. The current findings offer valuable support to health practitioners in making recommendations about spending time in nature to promote basic health and wellbeing, similar to guidelines for weekly physical".

The full paper is entitled "Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with [good health](#) and wellbeing", published in *Scientific Reports*.

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: Two hours a week is key dose of nature for health and wellbeing (2019, June 13) retrieved 29 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-06-hours-week-key-dose-nature.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.