

## Wildlife is key to our health

Discover how you can benefit from strengthening your connection to nature, with ideas for getting active, taking notice, learning and giving.

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Spending time in nature can have a profound and positive effect on our health and wellbeing. Indeed, studies examining how our relationship with nature impacts our mental and physical health consistently find that they are inextricably linked. Limit our access to, and interaction with, wildlife and our health suffers; spend more time nurturing our connection to the natural world and we thrive. A 2019 study of over 20,000 people, led by the University of Exeter Medical School, found that spending just two hours a week in nature – whether being active or just sitting and observing – significantly boosts our mental health and life satisfaction. Extrapolate from this and the benefits of wider, regular exposure to the natural world may be life-changing. “Choosing to spend time outdoors, somewhere green, is certainly my prescription for stressed-out bodies and minds,” says Dr Rangan Chatterjee, GP, author and presenter of *Doctor in the House*. “Research has found that time spent in green spaces lowers stress by reducing levels of the stress hormone cortisol. It can also reduce symptoms of depression, help increase attention span and focus, boost the immune system, increase our energy levels, lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure, and improve sleep.”

As many of us are unable to go outside to enjoy nature at the moment, we hope this uplifting supplement provides inspiration for when the situation changes. In the meantime, if you are self-isolating, visit [discover-wildlife.com/wellbeing](https://www.wildlife.com/wellbeing) for ways to connect to wildlife while you're indoors.

Kirstie Duhig is the editor of *In The Moment*, a monthly magazine about living well, filled with positive and practical advice for a healthy mind and body, sustainable living, mindfulness and travel ideas: [calmmoment.com](https://calmmoment.com)

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