



*There are many resources and approaches to using nature to reduce stress.
Consider this a short list to help you get started!*

Start with the basics

Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety for both youth and adults. This doesn't mean you have to plan a complicated educational activity to reap these benefits- sometimes the simplest ideas can be the most effective. Consider adding a little nature into your existing activities by:

- Including a short walk outside
- Arrange for part or all of your program to occur outdoors (consider an outdoor meal!)
- If indoors, bring the outside in with a few indoor plants, nature sounds, and nature images.
- For youth, schedule time for unstructured play time outside

Nature Related Resources for Youth

Georgia 4-H Environmental Education Activity Pages- Simple, easy to implement activities related to nature, outdoor, and/or environmental education. Current activities include: air plants, dig it, dish gardens, leaf scavenger hunt, looking at logs, nature observations, nature's colors, parts of a leaf, seed starters, and terrariums.

Located in Georgia 4-H Enrollment Staff Only/Shared Files: Curriculum Resources/Agriculture, Science, and STEAM/Environmental Education Activity Pages
Contact Kasey Bozeman (kaseyb@uga.edu) for more information.

Nature of Teaching- Purdue Extension's The Nature of Teaching includes formal standards-based curricula and informal activity-based curricula all centered around getting youth outside. The three program areas of the formal curricula include: Wildlife, Health and Wellness, and Food Waste. Each program area provides standards-based lesson plans free as a downloadable PDF.
<https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/nature/Pages/default.aspx>

Nature Explore- The Families' Club Kit is packed full of easy to use, developmentally appropriate activities shown to engage families in exploring the natural world together. <https://natureexplore.org/family-resources/>

Outdoor Mindfulness Activity- Mindfulness activities are great to take outdoors. The activity linked below is an example of an outdoor specific guided mindfulness activity.
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/outdoor-mindfulness-exercises-earth-day-patrick-cook-deegan>

Nature Related Resources & Civic Science Projects for All Ages

iNaturalist: iNaturalist is a joint initiative of the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society. <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

GLOBE Explorer: GLOBE Observer is an international network of citizen scientists and scientists working together to learn more about our shared environment and changing climate, coordinated by NASA. Current projects in clouds, land cover, mosquitos, and trees. To participate, just [download the GLOBE Observer app](#) and submit regular observations. <https://observer.globe.gov/>

NestWatch: Nest Watch is a nationwide nest-monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, coordinated by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. <https://nestwatch.org/>

Southeast Early Detection Network (SEEDN): The SEEDN website helps you identify and report invasive plants, insects, and plant pathogens in the Southeast US. <https://www.eddmaps.org/>

UGA Extension Great Georgia Pollinator Census: Began in 2019, the Great Georgia Pollinator Census allows people to spend 10 minutes outdoors each August and record the number/types of pollinators on a plant. <https://ggapc.org/>

Want to learn more about this topic? Check out these additional readings:

How Weather and Nature Affect Our Mood. UGA Office of Sustainability. <https://sustainability.uga.edu/stories/how-weather-and-nature-affect-our-mood/>

Connecting Kids and Nature: Health Benefits and Tips (The National Wildlife Federation) <https://www.nwf.org/Home/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature/Health-Benefits-and-Tips>

Leyla E. McCurdy, Kate E. Winterbottom, Suril S. Mehta, James R. Roberts, Using Nature and Outdoor Activity to Improve Children's Health. Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care. Volume 40, Issue 5. 2010. Pages 102-117. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1538544210000441>

Rappold and Dixon. Forest Bathing- Connecting to Nature to Improve Health. University of Arizona Extension. <https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1805-2019.pdf>

Books:

David Sobel: *Childhood and Nature*

Richard Louv: *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*

Additional Readings about Nature & Adults:

Florence Williams: *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*

Emma Mitchell: *The Wild Remedy: How Nature Mends Us - A Diary*

Simon Barnes: *Rewild Yourself: 23 Spellbinding Ways to Make Nature More Visible*

Joe Harkness: *Bird Therapy*

*These resources accompany the training *Coping with stress through nature (SES-023131)* and were compiled by Courtney Brown, Kasey Bozeman, Pamela Turner, and Diane Bales.*

Guided imagery instructions:

Guided imagery helps you use your imagination to take you to a calm, peaceful place.

- Get comfortable where you're sitting. Put your feet on the floor and find a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes.
- Start by just taking a few deep breaths to help you relax.
- Picture a setting that is calm and peaceful. This could be a beach, a mountain setting, a meadow, or a scene that you choose. It can be some place you've been before, or some place you've just imagined.
- Picture that special setting, and imagine you are actually there.
- Use all your senses, and add some detail. Is there a breeze? How does it feel on your skin? What do you smell? What does the sky look like? Is it clear, or are there clouds?
- It often helps to add a path to your scene. What does the path look like? Is it sandy, or rocky, or covered in leaves? What does it feel like under your feet? Where is it leading you? Walk slowly and calmly, and take in the environment around you.
- As you follow the path farther into the place where you are, feel yourself relaxing more and more.
- Now that you are deep into your special place and are feeling relaxed, take a few minutes to breathe slowly.
- Think of a simple word or sound that you can use in the future to help you return to this place. Then, when you are ready, slowly take yourself out of the scene and back to the present. Bring your sense of calm and relaxation with you.
- Count to 3, and open your eyes. Notice how you feel right now.

(Instructions adapted from Kaiser Permanente)