

# Nature Walks

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart  Mind  Body  Breath  Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

A walk in nature brings us a serenity by allowing our overstimulated modern minds a chance to rest. It helps us to relax, it lowers our stress, depression, and anxiety levels, it increases our attention spans and memory, and it provides a source of gentle exercise. Spending time in the natural world slows us down and makes us feel at peace; thus nature walks can be very effective as a supplemental therapy for addiction, AD(H)D, anxiety, and high levels of stress.

### METHOD:

#### Summary

Find a quiet, natural area and go on a walk.

#### Long Version

- If you live near a national park or can take a long weekend to go to one, they are excellent places to begin due to their prolific natural beauty. Otherwise, find a wooded area near you, even if its a city park or a flood plain in the suburbs.

# Nature Walks

## Mindfulness Worksheet

- Prepare yourself by wearing comfortable clothes that protect you from sun and brambles. Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes; the walking is as beneficial to the mind as nature. If you will be in a more secluded or wild area, prepare yourself appropriately.
- Go to the natural place: the more quiet and peaceful, the better. Try not to go for an intensive hike unless you are quite physically fit; you aren't looking for a workout that might disturb your sense of calm serenity.
- Walk slowly and with relaxed alertness. One of the beneficial aspects of the nature walk is that it engages your attention in a peaceful way, without demanding it in the way that a walk through a busy city might.
- Breathe deeply and comfortably, smelling the fresh air. Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the natural world, and take it all in without overthinking or overprocessing. Enjoy the greenness of the trees, the swaying of plant life in the wind, the singing of the birds. If you see something particularly interesting, allow yourself to appreciate it gently.
- Let the sense of lovingkindness that nature gives us fill you with each breath. If you feel it is appropriate, you mind want to give gentle thanks quietly for the beauty of the world and its serene stillness.
- Walk for as long as you like.

### **HISTORY:**

Retreating into nature has long been used to clear the mind. Henry David Thoreau famously went to Walden Pond to “live deliberately” to to learn “what it had to teach.” John Muir, who helped develop the national park system in the US, called natural areas “places for rest, inspiration, and prayers” and encouraged those who lived in cities to take time in nature for spiritual and emotional renewal. The Buddha spoke of the natural world’s beauty as a great source for spiritual joy, and St. Francis of Assisi used its beauty as evidence of the glory and benevolence of God.

# Nature Walks

## Mindfulness Worksheet

---

### CAUTIONS:

If walking in genuine wilderness, or in an area with dangerous wildlife or terrain, take all the precautions necessary for any sensible hiker. Make sure somebody knows where you are. Try to avoid long walks in excessively hot or cold weather, especially in secluded areas. Bring water and give any wild animals a wide berth. Do not walk alone after dark!

### NOTES:

Some people find organized nature retreats especially helpful to galvanize mental and spiritual renewal. You can find a nature retreat organization near you online that provides guided ecotherapeutic walks or psychologically and spiritually-oriented camping trips.

