



## Leaving The Stress Behind!

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Now that fall is arriving, it's a really good time to get outside and move. Runners and bikers know that it's prime season for training outdoors. But this season is for everyone. If you normally get your exercise indoors, or even if you don't work out at all, now is the time to take a leisure stroll for recreation and fun.

Besides the obvious fitness reasons, another motivation to get outside and be active is - stress reduction! Fall is back to school time for the kids, and it's also the time that business starts to ramp up, so we'll need a little extra stress reduction starting around now. Being outdoors for any kind of activity reduces stress in three ways: it provides a pleasant view, takes you away from your work environment, and it makes you breathe deeper. This might not sound scientific in any way, but let me get a little more into the details.

Research shows that pleasant surroundings and an enjoyable view can significantly lower stress. Believe it or not, there is actually a psychological reason why people like offices with windows! Even if you don't have an office with a window, having a nice color on your wall or a beautiful picture close by can also keep stress levels down. But we have some beautiful fall foliage coming up - so people should take advantage of that.

Window or not, when you're at the job or home and you've been working hard on something, focusing on something else for a few minutes will actually give you more energy to tackle an issue when you get back to it. Interestingly enough, changing your environment will stimulate your brain to think different thoughts. So, getting outside and taking a walk will help get you off your normal train of thought, and inspire new ideas. A few minutes away from your regular environment will allow you to come back feeling rejuvenated and more able to focus.

Finally, being outside encourages deep breathing. Especially around now when the air is nice, you just want to breathe it in! Deep breathing immediately reduces the heart rate and blood pressure, and reduces the level of stress hormones in the body. It also increases calming chemicals that are released from the brain, and helps us to be more alert and focused.

So again, three reasons why being outdoors will reduce your stress level: it provides a pleasant view, takes you away from your work environment, and it makes you breathe deeper. Everyone should really take a break in his or her busy day to go outside for some exercise. The next few months are going to be crisp and beautiful, and as we all know too well, they're not going to be like that forever!

*It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!*

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