



Harnessing the power of nature for mental health & wellbeing

InsideOut's guide for Mental Health Awareness Week
10–16 May 2021

The Power of Nature: Mental Health Awareness Week 2021



Mental Health Awareness Week happens every May. Its focus is on opening up conversations about all aspects of mental health and wellbeing — providing help and offering advice to those who need it.



At InsideOut, this is our full-time mission, but Mental Health Awareness Week is a great opportunity for everyone to re-ignite these important discussions, to remind ourselves about our mental health and wellbeing, and to take that all-important time to reflect and to grow.

This year's theme for Mental Health Awareness Week is the power of nature and how crucial nature is for our mental health.

What we'll be covering

- Keeping the mental wellbeing conversation at work going
- Bringing nature & mental wellbeing together at work
- Our nature-inspired self-care exercise
- InsideOut Support






In the last year, we have all weathered several challenging lockdowns in the midst of a global pandemic. Millions of us have found solace and peace in nature. For many, the last year has given us the chance to re-discover nature, in all its forms, whether it's wide, open fields, exploring off-the-beaten paths, discovering a new park, or even just setting eyes on a neighbourhood tree. Nature takes many forms, and wherever we find ourselves, we can always find even just a glimpse of nature around us.

In this guide for Mental Health Awareness Week 2021, InsideOut shares some inspiration on spending time outdoors, it explores the benefits of nature for your mental health, and highlights how work and time in nature can absolutely coexist.

Remember, it's OK to not be OK. InsideOut is here to help when you need it, and to support you in building up your own mental health and resilience.



Ready to
start thriving
with nature?





Keeping the mental wellbeing conversation at work going

We all have mental health. Now, perhaps more than ever, we need to be thinking about our own mental wellbeing and that of those around us.

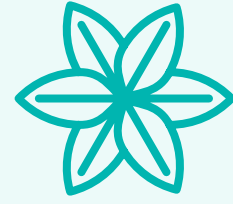
How can you as an employer continue to support your employees' wellbeing and ensure their mental health at work is cared for?

Mental Health Awareness Week is a fantastic opportunity for you to do just that. InsideOut's tips are designed to get you started with rolling out a successful week of awareness-raising, both during Mental Health Awareness Week and thereafter. We have suggestions for practical ways to bring nature, mental wellbeing and work together.

1 in 2

Adults, 50% of your workforce, will have a mental health challenge in 2021 due to Covid-19

(WHO 2020)



Bringing 'nature' & mental wellbeing together at work

Connecting with nature is one way that can help all of us to look after our mental health, but if we're working in an office or remotely, finding the time to step outside and get enough fresh air can be a challenge.



While spending time outside might not be a work-related goal, it is so important for mental wellbeing and does play into our overall happiness. In fact, studies have shown that spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated directly with good health and wellbeing!

So, we want to explore how we can all benefit from time in nature and how as a workforce we can achieve this.

Spending at least

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Here is a list of ideas that you could implement to make sure everyone takes some time to benefit from the power of nature and its positive impact on mental wellbeing:

Walking meetings

Not all meetings require screen sharing and being stationary at a desk. If that's the case, encourage 'walking meetings', which will give people a chance to step outside, to move, get some fresh air, but to continue working.

TOP TIP

These could be a particularly good option for 1:1 catch-ups or check-in meetings.

Breathing breaks

Taking short breaks throughout the day is important, so why not consider using some of this time to go outside (or even crack open a window or door) to take a breathing break. Once you're exposed to fresh, outdoor air, take up to five deep breaths.

TOP TIP

If you exhale for longer than you inhale, your body will start to relax.

Try inhaling for three counts, and exhaling for six counts.

Taking breaks from screen time

We know it's important to take eye breaks from looking at your computer screen for too long — this is important to avoid eye strain! To combine this with nature, why not look out a window, through a skylight, or even at a house plant.

TOP TIP

Try the 20-20-20 rule, where every 20 minutes you look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Encourage a lunchtime outing

Weather-permitting of course, but encouraging your teams to go outside at lunch, to eat, to get fresh air, or even to have a short walk is a simple way to make sure people are connecting with nature in their day. Although it can be tempting to eat lunch at your desk, it's so important to break up your day with different scenery and to take breaks that allow you to reset and refocus, so that as much of your working day as possible is productive.

Wellness Wednesdays

Why not dedicate one day a week to promoting the mental wellbeing of your teams and reminding each other that taking little daily actions can go a long way in maintaining and caring for our mental health.

What could this look like in practice?

- Share a weekly self-care tip or resource (or even a funny video or GIF for everyone to appreciate).
- Hold a weekly coffee break over video for anyone who fancies a quick, informal catch-up with colleagues.
- Create a 'wellness wall' — this can be real or virtual — create a place where people can share healthy recipes, workout ideas, self-care advice, inspirational quotes, uplifting podcasts, good books, etc.!

TOP TIP

Do what feels like the culture and style of your company. The more authentic things like this are, the better received and appreciated they will be!

Challenge your employees

New habits can be challenging to make stick, but they're more likely to happen if we start them with other people (or colleagues!). Consider launching a nature challenge among the team to encourage spending time outside each day. Not only does this encourage time to look after your own wellbeing, it's also a great way to bond with co-workers who are not based in the same location.

If you're stuck for ideas on what sort of challenge you could do, here are some of our ideas at InsideOut:

- **A company steps challenge** Set a company-wide goal to achieve X number of steps in a given time period.
- **'Grow a plant from home' challenge** This might require some organisation, but for those who want to participate, agree on a seed type, and launch a race for who can grow the biggest plant in a given time period.
- **Nature bingo** Identify different things in nature (e.g. a tree, a squirrel, a pond, etc.) that people have to take a selfie with. The first to finish the selection wins!

TOP TIP

Use your work-based social platform (e.g. Slack) to track and share progress, share photos, and offer encouragement.

Introduction: Time to take mental wellbeing seriously



Finding gratitude in nature — a self-care exercise

We've come up with a nature-inspired self-care exercise that can be done from home, the garden, the park, a field, and so on!

What is gratitude?

Gratitude means you are showing what you are thankful for, grateful for, and appreciative of.



Showing gratitude day-to-day can have the following benefits for your mental health and wellbeing:

- Boosts your mood
- Makes you feel more optimistic
- Benefits your physical health
- Improves social bonds



How can nature inspire your journey in practising gratitude?

Journaling is a great way to go about practising gratitude - taking a minute each day to note down something you're feeling grateful for. It sounds simple, which it is, and a really effective way to work towards positivity and looking after your wellbeing.

TOP TIP

The InsideOut app's journal is an ideal place to log your gratitude.

InsideOut's nature & gratitude exercise

For Mental Health Awareness Week 2021, we wanted to share a simple self-care exercise that gets us practising gratitude and spending some time either in nature or noticing the glimpses of nature around us.



What will I need?

- 2 spare minutes
- Your smartphone & InsideOut app

What do I do?

- Take a quick break from your day and go outside, or even open your window
- Take a deep breath in and out
- Look around and find a small detail in nature (e.g. a flower among the weeds, the sunshine filtering through the leaves, the dew on a blade of grass - get creative!)
- Soak it up and appreciate that small moment of peace
- Take a photo on your phone
- Open the InsideOut app
- Go to the Journal and add a moment of gratitude
- Upload the photo you've just taken



- Feel free to add in a description, or a simple statement describing one little thing you feel grateful for in that moment (don't overthink it - gratitude can be big or small, trivial or profound)
- Take another moment to breathe in some fresh air before returning to your other tasks for the day
- You're done! Self-care doesn't have to consume lots of our precious time, but as long as you're taking moments to check-in and step back is what's important.

TOP TIP

If you're having a bad day in the future, or feeling down, revisiting and reflecting on your moments of gratitude in the InsideOut journal can be one tool to refocus, ground your thoughts and try to steer your thoughts to a more positive place.





InsideOut Support

How could InsideOut help you and your team in supporting your mental health and wellbeing?

The InsideOut app is ideal for taking with you wherever you are, whether that's on your commute, to the office (or your home working station), or even on a walk outside.

With this in mind, you can use InsideOut to:

- Book and have 1-2-1 sessions with your chosen Mental Wellbeing Expert
- Use our in-app Journal to track mood, sleep, goals, and moments of gratitude
- Use the Mental Fitness Plan of exercises, content and resources to work on mental fitness, resilience and wellbeing.



To request a demo of InsideOut and how we could help to support your employees' mental health, get in touch with us at hello@lettheinsideout.com or [book a demo here](#).

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#itsoktonotbeok

To find out more about how InsideOut can help support your organisation or book a demo email Support@lettheinsideout.com

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