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## Benefits of Parks and Green Spaces on Health

Although people generally associate workouts with home or commercial gyms, a growing number of fitness enthusiasts prefer to do their exercise outdoors.

As states permitted Americans to spend time outside the home during the lockdown months at the height of the pandemic, residents grew to love their local parks and green spaces.

Respondents to a 2021 Verv survey showed that three in five individuals had become “outdoor people” when the app conducted the poll.

Moreover, adults who have been exercising outdoors pre-pandemic said they added 22 minutes to their alfresco routine since that year.

What's more, outdoor fitness parks are becoming popular, with recreational spaces installing exercise equipment to address the changing needs of local health buffs.

Even older American adults who regret not spending enough time outdoors during their childhood are grabbing their second chances.

In a separate poll, respondents shared how camping, fishing, and boating spark nostalgia, adding that the pandemic inspired them to return to these activities.

Such experiences are worth sharing and reliving, even when parents, children, and grandkids are miles apart.

Writing letters about times spent outdoors is a great way to memorialize these moments. You can go [here](#) to check the post office nearest to your location and keep the letter-writing tradition alive with your loved ones.

How essential are small parks and green spaces to individual and community health? Discover how the outdoors can boost your physical and mental energy.

## Physical Health Benefits of Small Parks and Green Spaces

Parks and green spaces are cost-effective locations for your workouts due to their proximity to residents and free entry.

Here's how residents can reap physical health benefits from these spaces:

1. They provide safe places for exercise and play far from busy streets and commercial zones, reducing the risks of injury and illness.
2. They reduce air and water pollution.
3. They can lower noise pollution through tree belts.
4. They cool the air by easing the effect of "urban heat islands."

This phenomenon refers to warmth from cities experiencing warmer temperatures due to concentrations of buildings, pavements, and other surfaces that absorb heat.

5. They can foster healthy eating habits in parks that grow community gardens or host farmers' markets.
6. They can speed up the healing of patients in hospitals and other care facilities where windows offer views of nearby parks and green spaces.

## Mental Health Benefits of Small Parks and Green Spaces

Community residents can take advantage of outdoor areas to stay mentally fit. Parks and green spaces support mental well-being in the following ways:

1. They can improve your concentration and creative thinking.

The National Park Service says that spending even 20 minutes outdoors can help with critical thinking and impulse control.

During one's relaxed state, involuntary attention takes over to appreciate birds and flowers. Meanwhile, voluntary attention—which humans use for work or study—receives time to rest and recharge.

2. They can reduce stress and violent behavior.

As nature evokes tranquility, communing with nature can calm the senses. During park tours where visitors learn how to care for their surroundings, people become less aggressive and develop positive connections with nature.

Contrary to common belief, criminals are also wary of parks. The greater public use of these areas dissuades law offenders from hiding in vegetated spots.

3. They help strengthen community bonds.

Parks and green spaces offer local dwellers a place to interact while doing things together, from exercising to holding community events, cleanup drives, and other activities.

4. They can boost office productivity.

People who work in establishments beside or near green spaces become more cognitively and emotionally engaged with their tasks.

5. They promote safer driving.

The sight of greenery relaxes the vision of motorists and can prevent speeding and other aggressive emotions.

6. They have a pacifying effect on children.

Exposure to natural scenery can help urban kids delay instant gratification and behave more calmly instead of acting on their impulses.

Children who grew up in areas with low levels of vegetation have a 55% risk of developing stress-related disorders.

However, this trend seems to apply to adults as well. A study published in 2019 said that nearly 50% of urban adults are at high risk of developing anxiety and mood disorders compared to their rural counterparts.

Reduced exposure to nature was among the listed contributors to these mental conditions besides migration and higher exposure to stress and health infections.

Residents can work with local governments or civic groups to make their green destinations more accessible for walkers, bikers, or wheelchair users.

You can also get feedback from your community on ways to make changes that will improve park use and access. Some approaches include connectivity of trails and open space to aid runners and cyclists.

Check out the resources from the National Recreation and Park Association and the websites of the local parks nearest your residence for more ideas.

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