

## Some Forest Bathing Tips for All Ages

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- 1) Be comfortable. Find a bench or bring your own foldable chair if needed to sit upon. A small blanket can be helpful if you plan to sit on the ground or on a log.
- 2) Find a spot where you can return to as often as you can. Get to know a special place in the forest where the trees become familiar, like old friends. Observe it during the seasons and marvel at the wondrous changes taking place.
- 3) Focus on being silent. Leave the iPhone in your purse or pocket if you need it with you. Smile and greet people going by if you like but refrain from doing a lot of talking. Learn to be still.
- 4) Focus on your senses: hearing: enjoy the rich sounds or the lack of sound; seeing: take in the vast array of different hues of green, for example, the color of the sky, the shapes of clouds, and the beauty of wildflowers; touching: notice the many kinds of textures on tree bark and the different surfaces of plants (note: be careful not to touch anything toxic, so a knowledge of poisonous plants is vital); smelling: inhale the oxygen rich air and how smells vary from season to season. The earth has a deep and nourishing aroma.
- 5) Breathing: inhale, hold your breath for four counts, then exhale slowly, releasing air gradually. This engages your parasympathetic nervous system and gives your brain, heart, and all your body the message to relax. Notice that trees, plants, and animals nearby are all breathing with you.
- 6) Gratitude: allow gratitude to fill your presence. Say Thank you to the trees, for example, for all they do for us: shelter, beauty, oxygen, food, shade, etc.
- 7) Think of things you can do to show you care such as bring along a trash bag and gloves to pick up trash wherever you go. Plant a tree and native wildflowers in your yard. Give back to nature when possible.
- 8) Teach children to respect nature and walk quietly while in the woods. This makes for a healthy and peaceful experience for all.
- 9) Donate to local parks and forest refuges whenever possible. Volunteer if you can.
- 10) Just ENJOY the experience of having some peace and quiet in the forest!!