

## Forest Bathing Therapy: The Healing Power of Nature

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### ABSTRACT

*The Japanese practice of shinrin yoku, or Forest Bathing, is good for Health and wellbeing. It is proven to reduce stress hormone production, improve feelings of happiness and free up creativity, as well as lower heart rate and blood pressure, boost the immune system and accelerate recovery from illness. This article aims to clarify the health benefits of forest bathing therapy. Electronic databases were searched in order to obtain the related data. The main findings confirms that forest bathing therapy may have many beneficial effects on human health. Longitudinal research, conducted worldwide, is needed to produce new evidence of the forest bathing therapy as an effective health-promotion method.*

### Keywords

Shinrin Yoku, Health, Relax, Outdoor, Recovery, Forest environment.

### Introduction

The beauty of the outdoors naturally encourages people to go outside, inhale fresh air, listen to the birds, take a walk, or watch the wind animate the branches of the steadfast neighboring trees [1]. As early as the 1980s, forest bathing in Japan was promoted as an important part of a healthy lifestyle through politics and medical science.

Several literature supports the comprehensive health benefits of exposure to nature and green environments on human systems.

### Methods

The electronic databases were searched included PubMed, Scopus, and Google.

### Results (Outcomes)

#### The Relationship between Forest Environment and Human Health

Forest Environment may improve people's physical and psychological health. Based on many scientific data, forest environment has a significant role in promoting human health [3].

### Forest Medicine

The Forest Medicine is a new interdisciplinary science, belonging to the alternative medicine, which encompasses the effects of forest (natural) environments on human health [8].

### Forest Recreation

Forest recreation is any activity conducted in a forest environment for pleasure and to refresh the mental attitude of an individual [2]. Forest bathing or forest therapy is one type of forest recreation and it meant to improve both physical and mental health.

### The History of Forest Bathing Therapy

Forest therapy is rooted in Japan and describes a consciously experienced, relaxing stay in the forest. The Japanese name "Shinrin Yoku" means "bathing in the forest", which does not mean bathing in a forest lake, but bathing in the atmosphere of the forest.

An important part of Shinrin Yoku is the conscious experience of nature with all your senses, often in combination with relaxation exercises.

### What is Forest Bathing?

Forest bathing, or Shinrin-yoku, is simply spending time outdoors under the canopy of trees Get closer to the forest.

It is a traditional Japanese practice of immersing oneself in nature by mindfully using all five senses [3].

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Forest therapy relies on trained guides, who set a deliberately slow pace and invite people to experience the pleasures of nature through all of their senses. It encourages people to be present in the body, enjoying the sensation of being alive and deriving profound benefits from the relationship between ourselves and the rest of the natural world [1].

Forest bathing is often used as an alternative method to treat many afflictions [2].

### How forest therapy can affect our health

In fact, taking in the sights and sounds of the forest can help us to relax. But it's not just our brains that get a boost. There's evidence that forest therapy is good for our bodies, too.

There is a large amount of scientific evidence surrounding the health benefits of forest therapy. Many studies have shown that forest bathing therapy reduces cortisol. Forest therapy has a positive impact on blood pressure (reduction in blood pressure) [4,6,8], it boost the immune system and accelerate recovery from illness [9]. It also may be helpful in coping with chronic widespread pain [2,5].

Forest bathing therapy might have the following merits: remarkably improving cardiovascular function, hemodynamic indexes, neuroendocrine indexes, and metabolic indexes [9].

Additionally, forest bathing therapy may improve sleep and creativity, have a positive effect on anxiety, depression, anger [2] fatigue and confusion [6], improve attention, lift mood [1] and may even help fight cancer and depression [7].

Also, forest bathing therapy may have preventive effects on lifestyle-related diseases.

### How does forest bathing therapy work?

Forest bathing involves very consciously perceiving the environment with all of your senses. Focus on smells, sounds, or colours, like the rustling of leaves or the scent of pine needles. The walking pace is rather slow and long.

### Conclusion

Forest Bathing is a powerful antidote to the pressures of the modern world. Numerous studies show that connecting with the forest has a positive effect on the mental and physical well-being, for example lowering blood pressure and strengthening the immune system.

The forest can therefore represent an important health factor. That is why regular Forest bathe is highly recommended from a scientific point of view.

### Recommendations

I would like to encourage healthcare professionals to consider forest bathing as an essential part of their therapy concept.

Furthermore, human health benefits associated with the forest bathing should continue to be researched.

### Disclaimer

No content in this article, regardless of date, should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician.

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