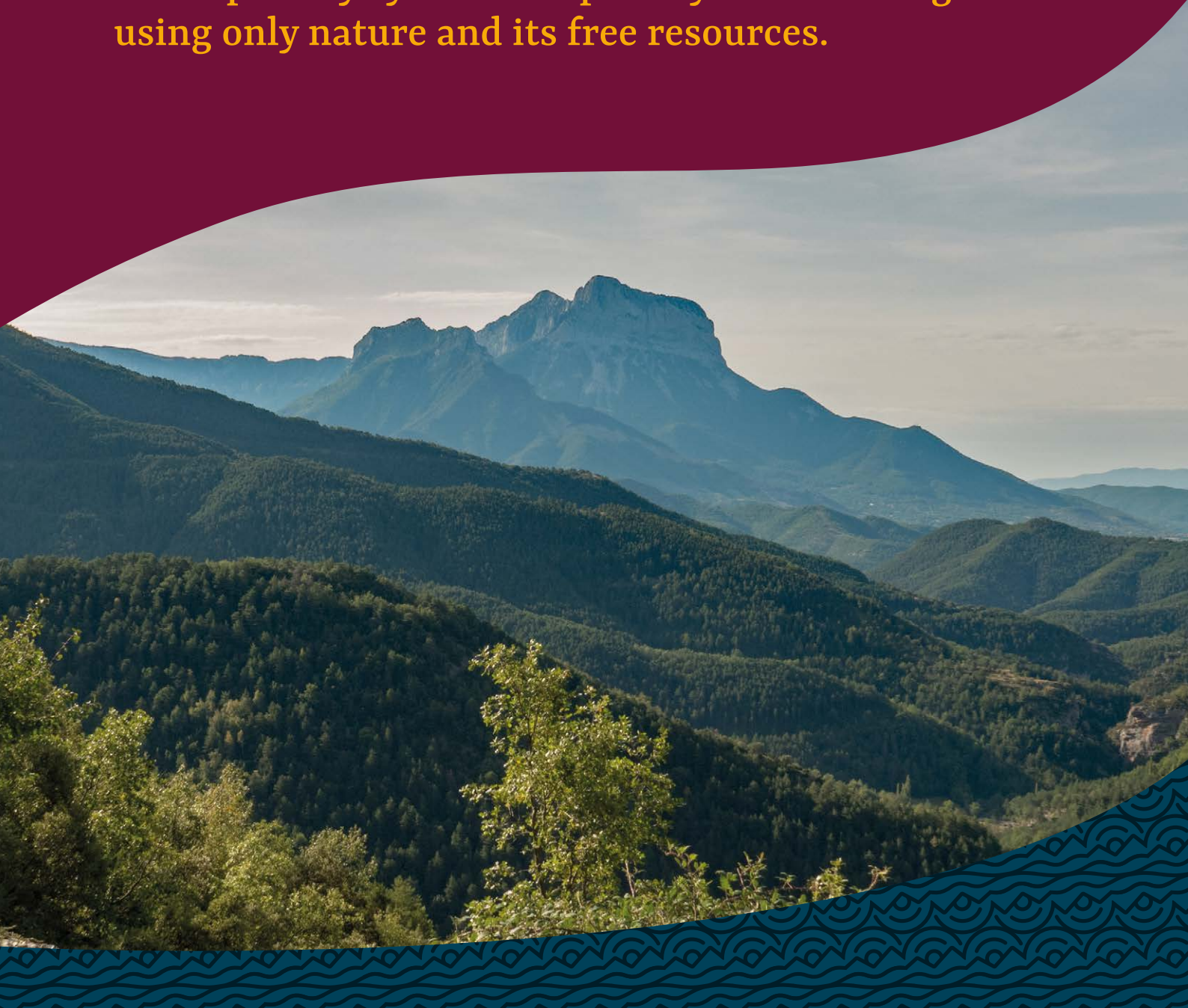




Roam &
Retreat

The amazing effect of nature on our overall wellbeing

10 simple ways you can improve your wellbeing
using only nature and its free resources.





Nature's healing powers

“Biologist E. O. Wilson’s “biophilia” theory suggests that there are evolutionary reasons people seek out nature experiences.” ¹

We are genetically programmed to seek out natural elements. We find trees, plants, water and animals all absorbing, stimulating and comforting. Our brains react immediately to the sights, sounds and smells, and take a moment in time to slow down from our usually busy lives.

The power of nature is becoming more and more proven by science and accepted by medical professionals as a preventative treatment. We know it intuitively and in our hearts, because of how we feel when we breathe fresh air as we watch the sunlight filter through the woodland tree leaves. Many studies are now proving these instincts to be true. We have outlined 10 easy ways (although there are many more!) you can use nature’s free benefits to improve your mental wellbeing.

1. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2017/03/13/what-happens-when-we-reconnect-with-nature/>



1 Indulge your eyes

We start with the easiest... If you can't get out to a beautiful natural landscape and time is short, take to your photo albums or source some stunning photos or videos online. It might sound silly, but studies have shown that even just a few minutes of looking at inspiring natural imagery leads to a feeling of "awe, wonder, gratitude, and reverence—all positive emotions known to lead to increased well-being and physical health."²

National Geographic is a great place to get your visual nature fix. Start with [this stunning slideshow](#).

2 Indulge your ears

It's not just your eyes that can help you indulge in nature's healing powers. It's also your ears. Researchers at Brighton and Sussex Medical School have shown this to be true. Natural sounds affect our nervous system activity. Listening to artificial sounds shows brain connectivity similar to that observed in anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Whereas natural sounds offered stress-relief in resting the brain.³

If you can't access soothing natural sounds by going out, or opening the window, try listening to this [8 hour long YouTube video](#) to get you through your working day.

2. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2017/03/13/what-happens-when-we-reconnect-with-nature/>

3. <https://www.bsms.ac.uk/about/news/2017/03-31-the-sound-of-nature-helps-us-relax.aspx>



3 The 3-day detox

Next time you have a long-weekend available, you could try the 3-day detox recommend by David Strayer, a cognitive psychologist at the University of Utah.

It's easy to forget how much we subject our brains to every day. It's not just our conscious thinking, but our brains are constantly flooded with messages and is filtering what it thinks you need to be aware of. It's always working. Give it a break every now and then. David Strayer found that after 3-days on a wilderness backpacking experience, (without being consumed by technology and media) his group performed 50% better on creative problem solving tasks afterwards.

Strayer said “on the third day my senses recalibrate — I smell things and hear things I didn't before. I'm more in tune with nature.”⁴

In 2009 a team of Dutch researchers found a lower incidence of 15 diseases in those living near to a green space, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and migraines.⁴

⁴ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/01/call-to-wild/>



4

Forest bathing

This is not literally a bath in the forest, but indulging all the senses in the surroundings of a forest. It has a hugely positive impact on us, mentally and physically and is becoming more and more accepted as a method of therapy by many, including medical professionals. A UK study by King's College London from 2018 showed us that exposure to trees, the sky and birdsong within cities improved overall wellbeing and mental health. Just a 20 minute walk in the woods or forest each day can make a difference.⁵

You can search for your nearest woodlands using the Woodland Trust website [here](#).

5

Open the window

If you can't get out, make sure you open a door or window every now and then, or you may have vents you can leave open above your doors. There are a surprising number of toxins surrounding us in our indoor lives, from the walls, paint, dust, furniture and products we use, so we have to work harder to intake enough oxygen. In doing this, our blood pressure and heart rate is raised.⁶ Try to make sure you always have a good oxygen supply and can breathe the outdoor air every now and then.

5. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/08/forest-bathing-japanese-practice-in-west-wellbeing>



6 Power by solar

Vitamin D is a tricky thing to balance. It helps our body to function more efficiently, and can be easy to not have enough, but also to have too much. You can check with your doctor if you are concerned about this. Vitamin D also improves our mood and reduces the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, lowers blood pressure and relaxes blood vessels.

As well as vitamin D, natural light effects our sleeping schedule. It's like we are solar powered! Natural daylight regulates our melatonin levels, which regulates our sleeping schedule. 'It remains inactive during the day and is switched on when darkness sets in. The right amount of melatonin ensures you have a good night's sleep—and wake feeling rejuvenated.'⁶

7 Daydreaming

It's not just about sleeping at night. You can give your brain a little doze in the daytime as well. The human brain needs at least 20 percent of all the energy your body produces. When you daydream, your brain settles into a different state called DMN. 'DMN is a complex circuit of coordinated communication between parts of the brain and is essential to mental processes that develop our understanding of human behaviour, instil an internal code of ethics, and help us realize our identities.'⁶

6. <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/60632/11-scientific-reasons-why-being-nature-relaxing>



8 Discover your green fingers

Studies show how regular gardening and community food growing projects improves our physical health and fitness (in burning calories, reducing physical pain, help with rehabilitation and chronic conditions, asthma and allergies...) but also improves our mental health enormously in reducing stress and depression. It's also fulfilling to have plants to care for and nurture, indoors and out.⁷

9 Breathing techniques

The NHS provide us with breathing exercises that will only take a few minutes each day to reduce stress. Try to make it a daily routine. Get comfortable, in non-restrictive clothing, with your arms by your side and relaxed. Breathe deeply into your belly through your nose, feeling your belly rise softly and naturally. Then breath out slowly through your mouth. Try to count to 5 for each inhale and exhale.⁸ You can also make a 'hah' or 'shhh' sound on the exhale for more impact.

7. <https://pureportal.coventry.ac.uk/en/publications/the-benefits-of-gardening-and-food-growing-for-health-and-wellbei>

8. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>



10 Time for an escape

Sometimes we just need to take ourselves away from our regular environment. Are you able to work in an office or room where you can close the door and walk away once you've finished working? Even being at home can remind us of all the chores we have yet to accomplish, and we regularly check-in with our technology and the (often negative) news. Try to find time to escape, whether that's a day out, a local weekend away, or a full week somewhere different. But be sure during that escape not to slip back into your daily habits that bring your thoughts back to the hustle and bustle of life. Try to switch off, and indulge all your senses in your natural surroundings. Make the most of it and know the impact it is having on you physically and mentally.



There's no question that nature benefits us, mind and body, in so many ways. Next time you think you haven't got time to get out for a walk as you've been too busy, maybe that's when you need to re-consider, and when you need it more than ever? Don't be too busy for yourself. Take care of you, and spread the word of nature's healing powers to others.

Wishing you happiness and health, and we hope some of these techniques help you to reap the rewards that nature has to offer. Thank you so much for reading!

All our best,

Richard, Yvett & Scott,



Richard & Yvett



Scott





Who are Roam & Retreat?

We believe in the healing powers of nature, which is why we have created affordable breaks in the Pyrenees to help you de-stress, re-connect and find solace in nature. Say no to stress, prioritise yourself and create lasting memories amongst this quiet and spectacular landscape.

We provide easy experience packages that allow you to fully indulge in the local splendour, of the mountains, hills, plains, wildlife, history and communities.

Find out more

We would love to hear from you regarding your experiences with nature, any questions, or if you would like to discuss staying with us.

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