

In this month's newsletter:

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Nature and  
our wellbeing

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Cycle to  
work day

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## How nature supports our wellbeing



More and more research is being carried out that demonstrates how a strong connection to nature has incredible benefits for your physical, psychological, and emotional health and wellbeing. Stepping outdoors, reengaging with nature, and taking a break allows us to balance out the stresses of our day to day lives, which are becoming increasingly immersed in the fast-paced world of technology and sitting inside for hours on end.

It has been found that high-quality nature, free from human-made structures and litter, benefits our wellbeing to a greater extent. However, nature of any kind, such as parks, gardens, or even trees planted along the side of a road, can have a positive impact. So, this August step outside and feel the incredible benefits nature has to offer:

The Mental Health Foundation (2021) found that people who connected regularly with nature had less stress and anxiety, lower rates of depression, and were happier overall. It has also been noted that the way nature activates our brains increases our creativity and attention span too, boosting our productivity and problem-solving ability (Suttie, 2016). Going outdoors also acts as the perfect opportunity to [practice mindfulness](#) and gratitude which will also work to clear your mind of negativity and boost your mood.

Immersing ourselves in nature is not only good for us psychologically and emotionally, but physically as well. There are numerous physical benefits to getting outdoors. Firstly, our bodies produce vitamin D when exposed to sunlight allowing us to maintain a healthy immune system, strong bones and teeth, and a healthy amount of the body's sex hormones oestrogen and testosterone. It has also been found that [exposing your eyes to natural daylight in the morning](#) can help with your circadian rhythms allowing you to get an optimal sleep cycle (Blume, Garbazza, and Spitschan, 2019).



## CYCLE TO WORK DAY

To celebrate Cycle to Work Day, which takes place Thursday 3rd August 2023, we have compiled a list of some of the wonderful benefits cycling has on the body and mind.

This year, the campaign has also considered the fact that commuting looks different in 2023, so they are encouraging all types of bike rides- whether that's cycling to pick the kids up from school, popping to the shops on your bike, or going on a group ride with your friends!

It doesn't matter if you've never ridden a bike before, not cycled in a long time, or go for daily a bike ride, Cycle to Work Day is the perfect opportunity to hop on the saddle and make a positive impact on your overall health and wellbeing. Here are some of the incredible benefits to inspire you to have a go!

### 1. Joint and muscle strength

Since it's a low-impact exercise, cycling is gentle on your joints. It doesn't place excessive strain on your knees, hips, and ankles in the way higher-impact activities such as running do. Cycling also provides excellent resistance training, helping to build strength and endurance in your leg muscles. Incorporating cycling into your lifestyle can

also improve agility and balance, which in turn reduces the risk of falls and injuries and promotes healthy joints.

### 2. Cardiovascular fitness

When you cycle, you engage the large muscles of your lower body and this promotes better blood circulation and enhances the efficiency of your heart and lungs. So, cycling regularly is an excellent way to boost your cardiovascular health. Cycling will keep your cholesterol, blood glucose control and blood pressure in check, helping to reduce your risk of dementia, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

### 3. Weight management

Even a moderately paced ride can burn hundreds of calories per hour, proving that cycling is a highly effective form of exercise to help you maintain a healthy weight or shed any unwanted pounds.

### 4. Mental wellbeing

Going on a bike ride is not just beneficial for the body - it's also brilliant for the mind. When we engage in regular physical activity, such as cycling, our bodies release feel-good hormones, known as endorphins, that are proven to boost mood, and alleviate feelings of stress and anxiety.

Whether you hop on your bike for leisure, to get from A to B, or as a competitive sport, incorporating cycling into your routine can have a massive impact on your overall health and happiness.

To learn more about the campaign, discount schemes on cycling equipment, and how you can win prizes, you can visit the [Cycle Scheme website](#).

