



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout July 16, 2023

The Great Outdoors



View from Squalicum Harbor over the Bay toward Mt Baker, Bellingham WA

When we perform Qigong (Energy Breathing) or T'ai Chi we gain the benefits of the slow moving and coordinated postures that connect our mind, body and spirit

(creativity). When we combine this gentle calming exercise with nature and the outdoors the benefits increase two-fold.

Research has suggested that exercising outdoors can promote better mental health by improving positivity, self-esteem, and mood, and helping to reduce negative feelings of tension, anger, and depression. One study showed the biggest impacts were evident almost immediately within the first five minutes of “green” exercise.

Although more research is needed, there is evidence that green exercise may also have numerous physiological benefits. One Japanese study that looked at the benefits of “forest bathing” proved that being outdoors in forest environments resulted in lower pulse rates, blood pressure, and lower cortisol levels, compared with city settings.

The study also reinforces what other separate research has shown — that we have a predisposed desire to connect with nature including the plants and animals in the world around us. Well, except for the bunnies who are voraciously eating every flower and plant I have. Just kidding. We love the bunnies, too. Time spent in nature has also been touted as a way to combat the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sunlight causes our brains to produce serotonin and its ultraviolet-B radiation prompts our skin to make Vitamin D. Vitamin D helps our bodies absorb calcium, phosphate and magnesium and is important for muscles, bones, and teeth. People who don't get enough Vitamin D are more susceptible to conditions such as osteoporosis.

Serotonin improves mood, promotes calmness, and can help us stay more focused. It's triggered by the sun, just like melatonin that helps us sleep at night is released in our brains by darkness.

Besides boosting serotonin and Vitamin D levels, sunlight helps to promote the healing of wounds and relieve skin conditions like psoriasis, eczema, and even acne, and may have uses in treating conditions that range from lupus to rheumatoid arthritis.

If you in town, do join us every Thursday at 9:30 AM at Zuanich Point Park behind the boathouse near water's edge. Bring a jacket as the wind off the water can be chilly even in July and August.

Walking in and with nature is a great way to gain the benefits of energy breathing and forest bathing. If you can't join us in Bellingham, find a way to walk every day. Your brain, mind, body and spirit will be grateful

Peace, Linda



British Columbia, Canada



Lake Frederick , Virginia near the Tri