

# community forum

## Improve your life with a daily dose of nature



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Growing up in the pro-computer age had its benefits.

As kids, my friends and I spent a lot of free time playing outdoors and exploring the natural world. We had no choice. Cries of "Mom, I'm bored" were met with a familiar answer "Go outside and play."

And we did. We rode our bikes to the local slough to catch frogs. We collected tumbleweeds to make forts. We climbed trees, ran, jumped, and played. We lay among the prairie grasses imagining pictures in the clouds. We spent hours searching for the elusive four-leaved clover. We listened to the buzz, hum, twitter, chirp, chatter, rustle, and flow of life around us. And, we reaped nature's many unseen rewards.

Studies have now shown that exposure to nature benefits the mind, body, and society in many ways. A daily dose of nature can be a simple, inexpensive, and effective way to prevent illness, speed recovery, and boost your overall wellness. A single dose can help



Supplied photo

**A daily dose of nature, as these winter walkers are getting, can be a simple, inexpensive, and effective way to prevent illness, speed recovery, and boost your overall wellness.**

you become calmer, smarter, happier, and healthier.

How much is enough?

A mere two minutes focusing on nature reduces stress. It lowers muscle tension and blood pressure and increases brain activity. An hour improves memory and attention span by 20%. Prolonged exposure over two or more days can increase the level of cancer-fighting white blood cells by 50% and this effect can last up to seven days.

These findings draw attention to the need to conserve nature within urban areas where over 80% of Canadians now live and work.

I was lucky. I grew up on the outskirts

of cities where there was an abundance of nearby nature.

Many city-dwellers are not so fortunate. Winnipeg is not a concrete jungle but it needs more natural parks and greenways like the Seine River.

Urban planners, decision-makers, and developers must work together with health advocates and environmentalists to ensure that all Winnipeggers can easily get a daily dose of nature.

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