

De-stress With Nature

By Jo Watson Hackl

3 Ways to Make Your Evening Happier

Here are three ways you can use the power of nature to get a terrific night's sleep and to wake up tomorrow refreshed, recharged, and ready to take on your day.

#1 Watch Sunsets

The first way is to create a tradition around watching a sunset.

- Watching a sunset puts you in a better mood. Sunsets are beautiful and they inspire a sense of awe that distracts you from your everyday worries. Research also shows that watching a sunset helps create a sense of calm and well-being.
- Watching a sunset relaxes your eye muscles as you look off into the distance, and it relaxes your body as you focus on the natural beauty around you. Taking time to watch a sunset helps you transition from your workday and sends signals to your body that it's time to unwind.

#2 Take a Walk

Take a long walk after dinner without checking your phone or listening to a podcast.

- Walking speeds up digestion and can help reduce blood sugar levels.
- Taking a walk gets you outdoors, and exercising outdoors has psychological and psychological benefits. Researchers say that people walking outdoors reported increased vitality, enthusiasm, pleasure, and self-esteem, as well as lower levels of tension, depression, and fatigue.
- Walking outdoors without technology also helps you be fully present in the moment. You might just be amazed at all the things you notice in your everyday environment. This gives you an opportunity to reflect on all the small things you are grateful for.

#3 Create a "Natural" Bedtime Routine

Go to sleep with the sounds and scents of nature.

- Put a fragrant flower by your bedside, or diffuse a certified, pure, therapeutic-grade essential oil, such as lavender, geranium, or chamomile.
- If it's safe for you to do so and you're surrounded by nature, keep a window open and listen to the night bird calls and the wind outside your window. If that's not an option, listen to a sound machine featuring real sounds from nature.

Why is this good for you? If you think about it, throughout most of human history, we've been surrounded by nature and fallen asleep to natural sounds and natural smells. Our bodies are programmed to respond to these scents and these sounds.

What do these scents and sounds do for us? According to scientists, our sense of smell is directly tied to the brain center for emotion and memory. Natural scents associated with pleasant memories help you to relax and shut down the mental chatter that can keep us awake. Natural sounds with their consistent frequency are known by scientists as pink noise. They can improve sleep quality by slowing and regulating brain waves. This helps you get a better night's sleep and wake up feeling refreshed. This explains why the sounds of falling rain and ocean waves are so calming for many of us. That way, you can drift off to sleep thinking about the people and places you love.

Finally, creating a bedtime routine puts you in control of creating a positive way to end your day. And scientist tell us that consistent bedtime routines help to increase both sleep duration and sleep quality, and that's good for all of us!