Getting Outside for Your Recovery

Most of us spend a great deal of time indoors, either because our work requires it or because it is our preference—or both. But there are plenty of reasons to get outside, many of which can support your recovery from a substance use disorder.

It might not be immediately obvious how being outdoors is any better than being indoors when it comes to recovery. We get that, so let us share a few reasons you might want to get outdoors more frequently.

Soak Up the Sun

[Sunlight offers a range of benefits](https://selecthealth.org/blog/2020/07/7-health-benefits-of-sunlight) that we don’t necessarily think about all that often but which nevertheless can support your sobriety.

For example, sunlight provides vitamin D which supports your immune system. A stronger immune system, of course, supports your overall physical health—and physical health supports your sobriety. When you feel physically well, you are less likely to turn to drugs or alcohol. (We will also note that there is some evidence to suggest that getting half an hour of sunlight exposure before noon supports weight loss, which can also support your overall sense of physical wellness. Additionally, vitamin D supports bone health.)

Meanwhile, sunlight can also provide benefits for your mental health. Sunshine increases levels of serotonin in the body, which can boost your mood. The benefits might be most noticeable for those who struggle with [seasonal affective disorder](https://woodedglen.com/seasonal-affective-disorder-recovery/) during the months with less available natural light, but the impact is always available. Good mental health and sobriety are known to be deeply connected, so getting the mental health benefits of time in the sun directly supports your ongoing sobriety.

Getting out in the sun also helps regulate the levels of melatonin in your body. Melatonin supports sleep and can also help reduce stress. [Better sleep](https://woodedglen.com/focus-on-sleep-night-day/) and less stress are both important aspects of the recovery journey.

We want to note something very important here: There are dangers related to sun exposure as well as benefits. Make sure you have effective sun protection when you are adding outdoor activities to your recovery routines.

Nurture the Mental Health Benefits of Nature

Giving your attention to the natural world and its beauty and variety is a wonderful way to interrupt the tendency to ruminate about the past or worry about the future. Finding a sense of calmness while interacting with nature can improve your overall mental health, which as we have noted, supports your sobriety.

Getting out into nature does not necessarily mean straying far from civilization. Finding any green space in your city or town is a great start.

The Key is to Unlock What You Like

Some people are homebodies and simply prefer the indoors to the outdoors. But if you are a homebody who is also a person in recovery, we encourage you to find a few outdoor activities that appeal to you. You don’t have to become a marathoner or join an adult sports league (though it is possible that one or both of those things might strike your fancy). Your outdoor [routine](https://woodedglen.com/make-sure-sleep-is-on-your-schedule/) could be as simple as a 30-minute walk through your neighborhood or at the local park while you listen to music, an audiobook, or a podcast you enjoy.

No matter what activity you settle on, the benefits of getting outside have a ton of upside for your recovery.

Sobriety is Like the Sun Coming out Again!