

Living Well with AIMGA

VOL. 7 - HEALING WITH NATURE



OVERVIEW



Nature is everywhere around you, and this month, we encourage you to tap into the beauty of nature to support your overall wellbeing, including your physical and psychological health. Studies are increasingly showing the benefits associated with experiencing “awe” in nature, including decreased symptoms of stress and PTSD, sharpened cognition, and increased feelings of pure happiness and life satisfaction. There are plenty of ways to immerse yourself in nature, including going for walks, hikes, bike rides, or runs outside, visiting local parks or greenspaces, practicing mindfulness meditations, guided imagery, forest bathing, and many others. In this volume of the Living Well with AIMGA (LWWA) newsletter, we hope you will enjoy summer and the nice weather that comes with it through connecting with nature and doing some healing of your own. You will learn some practical tips to support your wellbeing through the great outdoors.

Sources: [Greater Good Science Centre, 2018](#); [Jimenez et al., 2021](#); [Participaction, 2023](#); [Tillmann et al., 2018](#); [American Psychological Association, 2020](#);



HEALTH REMINDERS!



- **Avoid heat stroke** by wearing appropriate protective clothing during the day when the UV index is 3+ (hat, sunglasses, light-coloured clothing), drinking enough water, and wearing sunscreen. Learn more about how to stay healthy in the heat from these [Health Canada](#) tips or read up on our [May newsletter](#).
- **Practice road safety when biking:** make sure you have a properly fitting helmet, use a bell or your voice to alert pedestrians before passing, avoid traveling at high speeds (this is among leading causes of youth cycling injuries), use bike lanes and avoid busy streets, know and obey traffic rules, and bike with a buddy. It is important to brush up on the road trafficking signals and rules for your specific province.
- **When hiking or going backcountry camping:** plan ahead and arrive prepared, don't venture off marked paths, dress in layers, pack extra water and survival tools (e.g., first aid kit, bear spray, matches), travel with others, bring a compass and map and know how to use them, download the AllTrails app.
 - Check out the following: [AdventureSmart](#) trip-planning app, [Parks Blog](#), & [10 Golden Rules](#)
- For those who live in bear territory, knowing **how to avoid an encounter with a bear** is critical to enjoy nature safely. It is important to 1) make plenty of noise and travel in groups, 2) be aware of your surroundings and look/listen for bears and their signs (e.g., tracks, droppings, diggings, torn up logs, or overturned rocks), 3) keep your pet on a leash, and 4) carry bear spray and know how to use it.



RED FLAGS

1 If you see a bear, follow these steps: stay calm, speak to the bear firmly and calmly, back away slowly, make yourself appear big, and do not drop your backpack, as it could provide protection.

- [Click here](#) to learn about bear spray and how to use it.
- [Click here](#) for more tips on what to do if a bear approaches or attacks, tips for backcountry camping, etc.

2 If you are lost on a hike or camping trip, it is important to follow the S-T-O-P acronym. S – stands for stop, stay put, and calm down, T – stands for think, O – stands for observe, and P – means plan. You can read more about these acronyms and what to do here in this [article](#). Make a call if you're able (dial 911 and share your location and use your

GPS coordinates or landmarks to help your rescuers pinpoint your location) or try to send a text if your call isn't going through.

3 When exploring nature in the summer months, it is important to know the signs and symptoms of **heat stroke**. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if you are caring for someone who has a high body temperature and is either unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating ([Health Canada, 2022](#)).

[Click here for more information about heat stroke!](#)



CONNECTING WITH NATURE VIDEOS:



[Learn more about nature as a mental health prescription](#)
(Stanford Researchers)



[TEDX Talk on Nature and Health](#)



[Guided Forest Walk Meditation](#)

DID YOU KNOW?



AIMGA experts are available to speak to your organization on this topic.

Book your presentation today by emailing drew@aimga.ca

For more information, check out the full version of the "Living Well With AIMGA" Newsletter by scanning the QR code below with your phone!



<https://aimga.ca/wp-content/uploads/7.July2023-LivingWithAIMGA-Newsletter.pdf>