

# Five benefits why older adults should get outside this spring

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## 1. Increase your levels of Vitamin D

Older adults are more prone to having a Vitamin D deficiency. Spending time outside can help you build up your Vitamin D levels. Recent studies show a link between lower levels of Vitamin D and cognitive decline, depression, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type two diabetes and cancer. To increase your Vitamin D levels while reducing other risks, remember to wear sunscreen and minimize your time outdoors when the sun is strongest, typically between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

## 2. Spending time outdoors may boost your memory

Several studies have shown that nature walks outside can benefit your short term memory.

A University of Michigan research study gave participants a brief memory test, then divided them into two groups. One group took a walk around an arboretum, and the other took a walk down a city street. When the participants returned and did the test again, those who had walked among trees did almost 20% percent better than they had first time they took the test.

*Explore one of these beautiful Manitowoc County park options:*

Parks in Manitowoc County: <https://www.co.manitowoc.wi.us/departments/parks/>

City of Manitowoc Parks: <https://www.manitowoc.org/898/Parks-Amenities>

City of Two Rivers Parks: <http://www.two-rivers.org/trparks.php>

## 3. Improvements in mental health

Boosting your memory is not the only brain health benefit there is to being outside. Studies have shown that there are higher levels of serotonin on sunny days. Serotonin helps stabilize your mood and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety.

## 4. Exercise is good for the body

Many outdoor activities are centered on physical movement. While you may not be able to engage in intense workouts or move as fast as you once could, any increase in movement can help strengthen muscles, increase heart rate and improve breathing. Outdoor walks are also the perfect opportunity to socialize with a friend while getting in your steps.

*\*Before beginning any exercise routine, consult with your doctor on what recommendations are best for you.*

## 5. Improve your sleep

When was the last time you were able to say you “slept like a baby”? If you are a parent or grandparent you likely remember that a fresh, spring day outdoors would wipe out any little one

by the end of the day. The same is true for people of all ages. Fresh air, coupled with movement, can help ensure a good night's rest.

### **The Role of Vitamin D in the Aging Adult**

Meghan Meehan and Sue Penckofer\*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4399494/#:~:text=Epidemiologic%20evidence%20indicates%20an%20association,type%20of%20diabetes%20and%20cancer.>