Employee Wellness Toolkit | August 2025
**Premera Plan Members**

**EMAIL ARTICLE**

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**Benefits of Spending Time in Nature**

Spending time in our natural surroundings can provide a wide array of health benefits. Whether it’s a walk in the park, a hike through the woods, or just sitting under a tree, being outdoors can ease stress, lift your mood, and support better physical health.

Here are just some of the benefits of stepping outside:

* **Sharper focus and better attention.** Natural settings can help alleviate mental fatigue by reducing stress; and improving your focus, concentration, and cognitive flexibility, especially after long periods of work or screen time.
* **Improved mental health and emotional balance.** Exposure to nature has been linked to lower rates of anxiety, depression, and mood disorders. Furthermore, studies show that dedicated time to be outdoors can help avoid negative thought patterns.
* **Stronger immune function.** Spending time in nature can reduce stress hormones, like cortisol, which suppress your immune system. Sunlight can also contribute to stronger immune function by increasing vitamin D levels and improving your sleep.
* **More physical exercise.** Stepping outside can promote more physical activity, which is great for your mind and body. Walking outside for a few minutes every day can improve cardiovascular health, strengthen your bones, and boost your overall mood.
* **Increased social connection.** Shared, natural spaces are also social spaces. Time outdoors often leads to more face-to-face interactions and stronger communities, which can help foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation.

There’s a reason why people who live near parks and green spaces report less mental distress. In addition to offering a break from daily life, quality time spent outside can help your mental and physical health in countless ways.

**RESOURCES FROM BHS (enter BHT in employer ID to read)**

[Staying Focused When Vacation Is Calling](https://memberaccess.behavioralhealthsystems.com/pdf/newsletters/2025-07)

[Balancing Social Media and Real Life](https://memberaccess.behavioralhealthsystems.com/pdf/newsletters/2025-07)

**WEBINAR FROM BHT**

[Time Management: Making the Clock Work for You](https://seattlemetrochamber.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NxIpr9s2T--CBFO7CuKGiQ%22%20%5Cl%20%22/registration)

[Sept 17, 2025 | 11:15 AM](https://seattlemetrochamber.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NxIpr9s2T--CBFO7CuKGiQ%22%20%5Cl%20%22/registration)

**ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU** | Your Mental & Behavioral Health Benefits

Don’t know where to start? **Call Behavioral Health Systems at 888-720-5237** to talk with a trained counselor 24/7, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Here’s what you need to access the other resources available to you:

* **Kaiser Permanente**: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 1-888-287-2680 to be matched with a mental health specialist in your area or help you find addiction treatment. For help after hours, call t 1-800-297-6877.
* **Calm App:** The number one app for sleep and meditation – designed to help lower stress, anxiety, and more. [Sign in to kp.org to get started.](https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/washington/front-door)
* **Headspace Care (formerly called Ginger):** Text one-on-one with an emotional support coach anytime, anywhere. Support is just a text message away. [Sign in to kp.org to get started.](https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/washington/front-door)

**SLACK OR TEXT MESSAGE**

*Use this copy to send a group message to your team through Slack, text, or other messaging platform*

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**Recognizing the Link Between Mental and Physical Health**

Whether it’s a walk in the park, a hike through the woods, or just sitting under a tree, being outdoors can ease stress, lift your mood, and support better physical health.

Here are 5 benefits of stepping outside:

* **Sharper focus and better attention.** Natural settings can help alleviate mental fatigue by reducing stress; and improving your focus, concentration, and cognitive flexibility.
* **Improved mental health and emotional balance.** Exposure to nature has been linked to lower rates of anxiety, depression, and mood disorders.
* **Stronger immune function.** Spending time in nature can reduce stress hormones that suppress your immune system.
* **More physical exercise.** Walking outside for a few minutes every day can improve cardiovascular health, strengthen your bones, and boost your overall mood.
* **Increased social connection.** Time outdoors often leads to more face-to-face interactions and stronger communities, which can help reduce feelings of isolation.

In addition to offering a break from daily life, quality time spent in nature can help your mental and physical health in countless ways.

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