



Wonderful Ways to Well-being



## Children's Mental Health Week (1-7 February 2021)

Spending time outdoors is a great way to give your health and well-being a boost.

There are lots of things you can do whilst you are out and about, on the school field or in the garden at home.

Here are some of our top ways to improve your well-being and overall resilience.





## Wonderful Ways to Well-being

### Gratitude: The power of 5!

**Our minds often feel complicated and fuzzy but did you know we can actually only think of one thing at once?**

**If we focus on the good aspects of our life we take the time and energy away from the not so good. This is the act of gratitude, if we practise it daily we can instantly get a natural buzz of positivity.**

**Try this simple exercise either first thing in the morning, just before you go to bed or when you are out for a walk.**



- Show me your fingers, count them 1-2-3-4-5. That's right!
- Now think of 5 things that you appreciate in your life today, count them on your fingers.
- Do this every day, even when it gets harder it will help you to notice small details about your life.





## Wonderful Ways to Well-being

### Grounding: **Connect and focus!**

Do you ever feel overwhelmed or worried?

By developing our grounding skills we can manage all of those horrible feelings by connecting and focusing on other things.

**Nature is a great super power to tap into when you feel overwhelmed.**

- One way to connect is by choosing a special spot to sit or lie down. Make sure you have made direct contact with the ground. Focus on the small details around you, look up to the sky through branches or stare into the distance. Start by doing just a minute but try and extend your connection each day.

- Focus is also a great way to regain a sense of calm. Concentrating on a simple task can help you do this. Choose two small objects- shells, stones or pine cones. Place your hands out in front with the palms facing the ground, put your objects on the back of your hands. Can you walk around the space without dropping the items?





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### Earthing: Getting stuck in the mud!

Eugh mud! Well actually it's good for you, the probiotics present in soil can increase the levels of serotonin in the brain.

Getting stuck in the mud can make you both healthier and happier!

- Digging and growing things are a great way to engage with soil and give you a sense of achievement too.
- Try creating mud balls and decorating them with natural materials.
- Try your hand and mud painting onto material.
- Spread a thick layer of mud across a surface, and watch it dry.
- Create mud faces on trees or try out some mud pie recipes.





## Wonderful Ways to Well-being

### Energising: Finding your feet!

Across the world people use their bare skin and contact with nature to increase their sense of well-being.



- Take your shoes off, and feel your feet touch the surface below.
- Sense the earth beneath you and think of yourself as a tree, your roots spreading into the ground from the soles of your feet.
- Feel the roots energise as they reach the magma below. Feel that energy creep up into your feet and flow up through your body to the tip of your fingers and top of your head. How does that feel?
- Try walking across different uneven surfaces, walking barefoot can greatly improve your core strength and mobility. **Please check walking routes for hazards before going barefoot.**





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### Challenge: Building trust!

Stepping out of your comfort zone is really important for well-being and development.

Why not try an activity that is new or takes away one of your senses.



- Take a rope and set up a trail about waist height around your outdoor space. Try to make it as long as possible.
- Using a blindfold follow the route guided by the rope crossing the terrain. Use your sense to support your journey.
- Listen to everything around you, what can you hear? Smell? Feel?
- Try doing the route from the end to the start, does it feel different?





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### Creativity: Art smart!

Being creative with natural materials is a very tactile and sensory experience.

On your next walk collect some natural materials, what creations can you make?

Share your creations with others, expressing yourself is a great way to make not only yourself feel good but others too.



- Try creating spirals or mandala collages on the ground.
- Design smiley faces with leaves, sticks and stones to share with others on their walks.
- Build with sticks, how tall can your towers be?
- Build tiny fairy dens and magical gardens.





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### Self Talk: **Be your inner superhero!**

One of the biggest things we need to practise when it comes to our well-being is how we talk to ourselves.

- Find a quiet place to stand.
- Strike your superhero pose and hold it for 2 minutes.
- Tell yourself you are strong, your are kind, you are clever.
- How did that feel?



The more you talk to yourself in a positive way the better you will feel day to day.





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### Shinrin-Yoku: **Swimming in Nature!**

**Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) is an immersive sensory experience that encourages positive well-being by spending time amongst trees, feeling the grass beneath your feet and allowing the sound and movement of water to wash over you.**



- Leave electronics behind, put your phone off and in your pocket.
- Be prepared to walk aimlessly, without a goal or expectation.
- Take a moment as you journey to explore something in more detail, a leaf, flower or twig.
- Stop and listen to the sounds around you.
- Respect the silence then take time to share your experience when it ends.





# Wonderful Ways to Well-being



## Parks and Countryside: Outdoor Learning

School trips might not be on the cards right now but the parks and countryside service are still working hard to find ways of supporting schools, groups and families throughout these challenging times.

### Current Outdoor Learning Resources

- Winter Tree Identification Challenge (Video)
- 10 Ideas for outdoor learning
- Taking Maths outside
- Outdoor Art Challenge
- Winter Challenge Pack

### Coming soon...

- Step into Spring: Seasonal change
- Literacy and Landscape
- Wild Workouts
- Early Years Explore

For further details please contact [outdoorlearning@durham.gov.uk](mailto:outdoorlearning@durham.gov.uk)

