

Shinrin-Yoku:

HOW CYBERJAYA CITIZENS CAN BENEFIT FROM FOREST BATHING



Working in a concrete jungle can be quite stressful. This is especially true after a long and hard day at work. In fact, scientists have confirmed that life in the city is more stressful!



According to the Daily Mail, living among the crowds affect parts of the brain that deals with stress and emotion. The study was conducted by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute in Quebec.

The research revealed that people living in cities are more likely to suffer from anxiety and mood disorders, as well as schizophrenia.

Here in Malaysia, working and living in cities is rather unavoidable. Most of the job opportunities are located in the Klang Valley.

The solution, however, might be found in a couple of Japanese philosophies.

The magical healing powers of nature

Japan is well-known for having large and packed metropolitans. To combat the effects of living in such bustling cities, they developed a philosophy called "shinrin-yoku". The term means "forest bathing" or "taking in the forest atmosphere". In Japanese medicine, this practice has since become the cornerstone of preventive health care and healing.

Shinrin-yoku is performed simply by spending time in the forest or any place that has an abundance of nature. It is NOT the same as activities such as exercise, hiking, or jogging. Instead, you walk through nature in a relaxed way and connect with it through your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Shinrin-yoku is like a bridge. By opening your senses, it bridges the gap between you and the natural world.








It doesn't matter if you are walking aimlessly and slowly. You should leave your phone and gadgets behind. Take the opportunity to savour the sounds, smells, and sights of nature. Immerse yourself in the forest.



In the past several decades, multiple scientific studies have proved the healing and therapeutic effects of this practice. In fact, since 2004, the Japanese government has invested way over USD4 million on research into the physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku.



Among The Benefits Are:

-  Boosted immune function
-  Reduced blood pressure and stress
-  Improved sleep, mood, and ability to focus, even in children with ADHD
-  Deeper and clearer intuition
-  Accelerated recovery from surgery or illness
-  Elevated energy level
-  An overall increase in sense of happiness

Shinrin-yoku is also closely associated with another Japanese practice – kachou fuugetsu. A word-for-word translation of the Japanese characters is “Flower, Bird, Wind, Moon”. Combined together, kachou fuugetsu can be generally translated to “learning about yourself by experiencing the beauty of nature”.

Cyberjaya, Tamarind Square, and forest bathing

Residents of Cyberjaya can consider themselves lucky that the city doesn't have the same bustle and flurry as other locations in the Klang Valley. Furthermore, we're lucky that we have a place like Tamarind Square and its garden and nature concept.

Tamarind Square is a unique retail and office development that's set within a green oasis. The shops and offices here are surrounded by cascading “hanging gardens” and viable tree houses. It is a convenient way to take a break from work and practice shinrin-yoku without having to travel far.



Although shinrin-yoku should ideally be performed in actual places of nature, the benefits can still be achieved in “artificial green areas”. Spots in the city such parks and gardens can provide similar effects. The emphasis, of course, is how you connect with the nature around you.

A place like Tamarind Square allows you to take a quick break whenever you are stressed at work. Located on the main road of Cyberjaya and within walking distance of the Multimedia University (MMU), business and work here will be, quite literally, a walk in the park.