

Nature's playground

Getting outdoors can help kids feel happier and healthier. These activities will give the whole family a wellbeing boost

In our fast-paced lives, it's easy to lose touch with the natural world. But connecting with nature isn't just a pastime – it's a tonic for our mental wellbeing, helping to reduce stress, lift our mood and give our minds a much-needed rest. For many young people, school may be the only place they can connect with nature.

But our *Schools for Nature* report reveals that only a quarter of UK schools offer daily opportunities to do so.

With young people today increasingly facing mental health struggles, finding ways for them to engage with the natural world is more important than ever. Fortunately, there are lots of quick, simple and fun ways to bring nature into kids' lives – in fact, just 20 minutes a day can work wonders. From games and crafts to helping local wildlife, these easy ideas can help children get their daily dose of nature. Why not challenge the whole family to do one thing every day and track your progress together?



1. Get crafty with nature

Nature has long been an artistic muse, but why not go a step further and get creative with nature? Whether you arrange natural objects into pleasing patterns, try leaf printing or press fallen flowers, it's a fun and rewarding way to express yourself while connecting with nature.



2. Discover sensory surprises

Fill a basket, box or bag with natural treasures such as pine cones, leaves, shells, pebbles and twigs. Then let little ones dive in, feeling the different textures, shapes and sizes – it's like a wild lucky dip! These sensory boxes are a great way to introduce kids to the outdoor world through touch and play.



3. Grow a sunflower

Surely the happiest flowers of all, these cheery giants are easy to grow. Sow your seeds inside in March, then move them outdoors in April or May when they're established. Why not turn it into a competition by writing your names on the pots and seeing whose bloom towers above the rest?



4. Help feathered families

As spring unfolds, support busy bird parents by offering energy-rich treats such as sunflower hearts and peanuts. You could also give them a spot to splash about and have a drink by setting up a simple bird bath – a shallow dish, pot or pan works perfectly. Just add fresh water every day.



5. Pick up a little litter

Litter-picking is a fantastic, hands-on way to show children the importance of looking after our environment and 'doing our bit', even if it's just for five minutes. Check for local clean-ups – it's a great way to get to know your neighbours and boost your sense of community spirit.



6. Play nature's games

Transform nature into a playground! Create a noughts-and-crosses grid out of sticks (using pebbles and leaves as markers), challenge each other to 'I Spy' using only natural objects, or craft a tiny leaf boat and sail it across a puddle. Who knew sticks and stones could be so much fun?



7. Build a bug hotel

Channel your inner architect and create a cosy home for minibeasts: build a log pile in a quiet corner of your garden, then stuff the gaps with twigs, bamboo canes, leaves and pine cones for insects and other invertebrates to move in. Watch as your bug hotel attracts a range of tiny guests.



8. Search for natural treasure

In the woods, at the beach or in your garden, a treasure hunt is an exciting way to explore and discover nature through fresh eyes. Look for patterned stones, vibrant flowers, oddly shaped sticks and pretty shells. Photograph your finds, and note the sounds and scents you encounter along the way.

A Prescription For Nature

WHEN WE RESTORE NATURE,
NATURE RESTORES US.



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