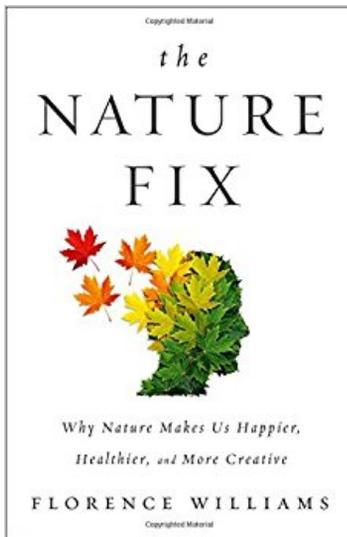


“The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative” by Florence Williams



❖ We suffer from an “epidemic dislocation from the outdoors,” Williams writes, and it’s destructive to our mental and physical health. The therapy is straightforward. **“The more nature, the better you feel.”**

❖ An overview from the publisher (W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.), offers the following description:

“An intrepid investigation into nature’s restorative benefits by a prize-winning author. For centuries, poets and philosophers extolled the benefits of a walk in the woods: Beethoven drew inspiration from rocks and trees; Wordsworth composed while tromping over the heath; and Nikola Tesla conceived the electric motor while visiting a park. Intrigued by our storied renewal in the natural world, Florence Williams set out to uncover the science behind nature’s positive effects on the brain. In this informative and entertaining account, Williams investigates cutting-edge research as she travels to fragrant cypress forests in Korea to meet the rangers who administer “forest healing programs,” to the green hills of Scotland and its “ecotherapeutic” approach to caring for the mentally ill, to a river trip in Idaho with Iraqi vets suffering from PTSD, to the West Virginia mountains where she discovers how being outside helps children with ADHD. The Nature Fix demonstrates that our connection to nature is much more important to our cognition than we think and that even small amounts of exposure to the living world can improve our creativity and enhance our mood. In prose that is incisive, witty, and urgent, Williams shows how time in nature is not a luxury but is in fact essential to our humanity. As our modern lives shift dramatically indoors, these ideas—and the answers they yield—are more urgent than ever.”

- ❖ A few “pearls” from the book, described in a New York Times book review by Jason Mark, are noted below: (You can read the full review [here](#).)
 - As little as 15 minutes in the woods has been shown to reduce test subjects’ levels of cortisol, the stress hormone.
 - Increase nature exposure to 45 minutes, and most individuals experience improvements in cognitive performance.
 - Researchers in England have shown that access to green spaces reduces income-related mental health disparities.
 - Aerosols present in evergreen forests act as mild sedatives while also stimulating respiration.
 - Water and birdsong have been proven to improve mood and alertness.
 - Nature’s benefits might be due to something as simple as the fact that natural landscapes are, literally, easy on the eyes. Many of nature’s patterns —raindrops hitting a pool of water or the arrangement of leaves —are organized as fractals, and the human eye moves in a fractal pattern while taking in a view. Such congruence creates alpha waves in the brains —the neural resonance of relaxation.
 - Most people get a lot of benefit from city parks and as little as five hours a month does the trick.
 - Awe, which many people experience in nature, is, according to one study, associated with increased generosity toward other people.