Hiking and Other Outdoor Activities

While it is well established that a healthy body and mind most often go together and that exercise can help anyone on a path to mental wellness, there are extra benefits when that exercise takes place in the great outdoors. Stress and anxiety respond well to having a physical outlet and even more so when time is taken to enjoy nature.

**Benefits to Choosing Outdoor Workouts**  
  
You may remember being told often as a child how important it was to "go out and get some sunshine." It's true that the vitamin D provided from a little sunlight during a morning jog can have far-reaching benefits.   
  
Getting adequate sunlight, much like exercising itself, helps to build the immune system up and regulate your chemical levels, which has a profound effect on your mood. Even just a quick 15-minute walk outside during your lunch break can give your mood a much-needed boost.  
  
But vitamin D isn't the only thing that going outside to exercise will provide to you. Many of the benefits found through exercise are amplified by the outdoors. Fresh air helps keep oxygen levels high, blood pressure low and can even improve your heart rate. Working out indoors may have similar benefits at a base level, but if you decide to take your routine outdoors, you can expect an even healthier experience for both mind and body. Much like deep breathing improves focus and helps to keep anxiety at bay, a little fresh air can go a long way.  
  
Going outside for a workout is also an excellent way to hone your focus. Often when working out at home it can be tempting to stop and check your phone or take frequent breaks for other less active pastimes.   
  
Setting aside time that you respect as the time you're going to work on your health and using that short period outside to workout and bring focus back to how you're feeling mentally and physically can help greatly with self-esteem, managing stress and focusing on yourself in a healthy, positive way.

**Outdoor Workout Possibilities Are Endless**  
  
If you're struggling to find workout routines that fit into your schedule or that are affordable, there are a lot of exciting options. Going out of your way to explore new areas through hiking or jogging can bring great satisfaction, as well as helping you to build confidence as you learn more about your local areas.  
  
Going on daily walks, even just around the block, is also a good way to meet new people. But even on your own your mental health benefits just from forming a healthy routine and getting blood and oxygen flows up while stress levels are worked out of the body.  
  
More adventure can be had for those looking for new mental stimulation by going swimming at the local public pool or beach, cycling in a new neighborhood, or even horseback riding, skiing or canoeing if any nearby facilities allow for these types of activities.