NEWS LESSON

What Can a Walk in Nature Actually Change?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Where would you go for a walk if you had twenty minutes?
2. Would you rather walk somewhere familiar or explore a new route?
3. What helps you notice your surroundings?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**genuinely**	☐	A	things that help to cause a result
2	**systematic**	☐	B	done in an organised way, using a clear method
3	**randomised**	☐	C	the area around where you live
4	**outcomes**	☐	D	simple and not complicated
5	**factors**	☐	E	results of something
6	**straightforward**	☐	F	in a real and honest way
7	**mobility**	☐	G	the ability to move around easily
8	**neighbourhood**	☐	H	chosen by chance, not by a person's decision

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A 2025 review found the strongest results for mood and mixed ones for attention and stress. Access to a decent park is not shared equally.

1 After a stressful morning, many people feel better following a walk among trees or beside the sea. The experience is familiar, but researchers have been trying to work out how much of the benefit comes from nature itself and which aspects of our wellbeing are most affected.

2 There is a difference between exercising because you feel you should and going outside because you genuinely enjoy it. The second may be easier to keep up in the long run.

3 A systematic review published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology in November 2025 examined randomised experiments involving adults and natural environments. The evidence was strongest for improvements in mood, such as feeling calmer and experiencing fewer negative emotions. Findings for attention and memory were less consistent, while results relating to stress depended partly on how stress was measured.

4 This matters because articles about nature sometimes promise too much. A pleasant afternoon outdoors is not necessarily a treatment for a mental health condition, and a single walk will not transform everybody's concentration. Research suggests useful benefits, but their size and reliability vary between outcomes and studies.

5 The effect may involve several factors working together. Natural surroundings can offer a change from traffic, screens and crowded indoor spaces. Walking adds physical movement, while parks or beaches may create opportunities to spend time with other people. Separating these influences scientifically is not always straightforward. Access matters, too. A peaceful woodland path is a luxury if you live beside a busy road, have limited mobility or cannot spare the time to travel to a park.

6 The gap is a practical one. Someone living near a safe, attractive park has more opportunities for regular outdoor time than a person in a neighbourhood with poor facilities. Weather, mobility and the demands of work can further limit people's choices. Telling individuals to 'go outside more' ignores these practical differences.

7 The surroundings people choose may also influence whether outdoor time feels restorative. A crowded park beside a busy road can offer a very different experience from a quiet woodland path, and preferences vary according to mobility, safety and personal interests. Social contact may be another part of the benefit.

8 Meeting a friend for a walk combines movement, conversation and a change of environment, making it difficult to isolate one factor. This complexity should not put cities off creating accessible green spaces. It suggests that good design matters: places need safe paths, seating, maintenance and suitable transport links. A healthy environment is most useful when people can visit it regularly, not only on occasional trips to distant countryside.

9 The reasonable conclusion is neither that nature works miracles nor that its benefits are imaginary. Spending time in green or coastal spaces can support mood, and cities may have good reasons to look after such places. A walk is not a replacement for medical care, but it can be a valuable part of ordinary life.

Sources: Journal of Environmental Psychology. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. All the studies in the review measured stress in the same way. T F NG
2. The writer thinks cities should stop creating green spaces because the benefits are unclear. T F NG
3. Someone near a safe park has more chances to go outside regularly than a person in a neighbourhood with no safe park. T F NG
4. The researchers who wrote the review work at a university. T F NG
5. Walking with a friend makes it easy to say which part of the walk helps most. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

complexity	**facilities**	**hospitality**	**luxury**	**maintenance**	**preferences**	**reliability**
transport						

1. A good experiment must give similar results each time it is repeated, so scientists always test its _____ .
2. For many families, a holiday abroad is a _____ rather than something they can afford every year.
3. The hotel is cheap, but its _____ are poor, with no gym, pool or lift.
4. Hotel guests have different _____ for food, so the menu offers several choices.
5. Because of the _____ of the human mind, no single study can explain how people feel.
6. The old footpath needs regular _____ to stay safe in winter.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time the review came out, researchers _____ dozens of studies. (EXAMINE)
2. Many city parks _____ more than a hundred years ago. (BUILD)
3. She _____ the park every day since she moved here. (VISIT)
4. If I _____ more free time, I would walk every morning. (HAVE)
5. Telling individuals _____ outside more ignores practical differences. (GO)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Fixed pairs are often a verb plus noun or an adjective plus noun. Ask which word people usually choose, not only which word fits the meaning.

energy	life	promise	reasonable	road	traffic	walk

1. Some headlines _____ too much and then disappoint readers.
2. A park beside a busy _____ can feel noisy and stressful.
3. A single _____ will not change your life, but regular exercise might.
4. Many people want to get back to ordinary _____ after a long illness.
5. After comparing both studies, the _____ conclusion is that the evidence is still limited.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What would make it easier for more people to spend time outdoors?
2. Does a walk need to be somewhere beautiful to be worthwhile?
3. Would you protect a daily walk if it meant leaving another task unfinished?

9 Role-play: our local park

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the council officer

You have money for one job in the park this year: new lights, new benches or a new path. Ask the resident two questions, then decide what to offer. You can say yes, no, or yes to part of the request.

Student B · the resident

The park near your home is hard to enjoy. The path is broken and there are no benches. Ask the council to fix it, explain who needs it most, and try to get a date.

Useful phrases

I'd like to talk about the park near my house.
It's hard for older people to use it.
We've only got money for one thing this year.
What matters most to you?
I'm afraid I can't promise a date.
Could we agree on a small first step?

Afterwards, tell the class what the council decided and whether you think it was fair.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 F · 2 B · 3 H · 4 E · 5 A · 6 D · 7 G · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 reliability · 2 luxury · 3 facilities · 4 preferences · 5 complexity · 6 maintenance

6 Verb forms

1 had examined · 2 were built · 3 has visited or has been visiting · 4 had · 5 to go

7 Language focus

1 promise · 2 road · 3 walk · 4 life · 5 reasonable

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