

# Nature & Outdoor Wellness — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Nature & Outdoor Wellness course and gives you structured tools to apply the science, track your progress, and build a personal outdoor practice that lasts. Each section corresponds to one course module, moving from understanding the evidence through forest bathing practice, green exercise planning, and finally designing a sustainable long-term routine. Complete the exercises in order for the first pass; return to individual items as reference tools after that.

## The Science of Nature Exposure

Ground your practice in the research evidence by auditing your current relationship with nature and identifying which biological pathways you most need to activate.

### Exercise: Your Nature Exposure Baseline Audit

Before changing anything, measure your current weekly nature contact accurately. Most people significantly underestimate or overestimate. Spend 5 minutes with this exercise before reading further in the course.

- Count the total minutes you spent outdoors in a natural setting (any green space, park, garden, trail) last week. Break it down by day. What is your honest weekly total?

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- Which of the three physiological pathways — cortisol reduction, phytoncide inhalation, parasympathetic activation — do you suspect you are most deficient in, based on your current symptoms (stress, fatigue, poor focus, lowered immunity)?

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- Recall the last time you felt genuinely restored after time outdoors. Where were you, what were you doing, and how long did it last? What made it different from typical outdoor time?

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- Based on the White et al. threshold of 120 minutes per week, what is your current deficit (in minutes per week) — and what is one existing calendar slot where you could add 20 minutes outdoors without moving anything else?

### Worksheet: Nature Framework Selector

Use this worksheet each morning to select which restorative framework — Attention Restoration Theory (ART) or Stress Recovery Theory (SRT) — your session should prioritise. Fill in honestly; this takes under 2 minutes.

Today's date

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Primary symptom this morning (circle one): mental fog / decision fatigue / brain scatter / anxiety / tension / emotional distress / irritability

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Framework indicated by symptom (ART for fog/fatigue/scatter — SRT for anxiety/tension/distress/irritability)

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Environment type needed (ART = complex natural setting; SRT = open space with water)

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Specific location I will go to today

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Session type (Tier 1 restorative / Tier 2 active)

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Planned duration (minutes)

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### Checklist: Research Literacy Checklist — Before You Cite a Nature Study

- Identify the study design: RCT with crossover, cohort, or pre-post single group
- Note the sample size (under 30 = treat findings as preliminary)
- Check whether the control condition was matched for duration and physical activity level
- Confirm the outcome was a physiological measure (cortisol, HRV, blood pressure) rather than self-report only
- Identify the setting: managed forest, urban park, or laboratory simulation — they produce different effect sizes
- Check if the study was conducted in Asia (Japanese shinrin-yoku research) and note that phytoncide composition differs by tree species from your local environment
- Note whether the effect persisted beyond the day of measurement or was acute only

### Shinrin-Yoku: Forest Bathing Practice

Develop your personal forest bathing protocol and sensory toolkit through structured reflection and planning exercises tied directly to the ANFT methodology.

#### Exercise: Post-Session Sensory Debrief

Complete this exercise within 30 minutes of returning from any shinrin-yoku or restorative outdoor session. It takes 5–8 minutes. The act of writing anchors the sensory experience and builds the neural associations that make subsequent sessions richer.

- Describe in specific detail (not general impressions) the three most vivid sensory moments from today's session — one sound, one smell or texture, one visual detail. Be concrete: not 'birdsong' but 'a high repeated three-note call from the north-east canopy.'

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- When did you notice your mind most quiet? What were you doing at that exact moment? What had you done in the 5 minutes before it?

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- Which of the five ANFT invitations did you attempt? What happened? What would you change about how you offered it to yourself next time?

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- Rate the session honestly (1–10) on two dimensions: depth of immersion (did you forget about daily concerns?) and physiological calm (did you feel noticeably different in your body?). What drove the gap between the two scores, if any?

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#### Worksheet: My Forest Bathing Location Inventory

Map out up to five accessible outdoor locations and rate each against the key criteria for restorative quality. Use this to choose the right location for your goal on any given day rather than defaulting to habit.

Location name and address

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Distance from home or work (minutes)

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Estimated green visual cover (under 30% / 30–60% / over 60%)

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Water present (none / distant view / adjacent / immersive)

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Crowd density at my usual visit time (low / moderate / high)

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Ambient noise quality (natural sounds dominant / mixed / traffic dominant)

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Best use case (ART-fatigue recovery / SRT-stress relief / green exercise / full shinrin-yoku session)

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My 1–10 restoration rating from personal experience

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### Checklist: Pre-Session Readiness Checklist for Shinrin-Yoku

- Phone set to airplane mode or left at car/home
- No headphones or earbuds brought into the session
- Comfortable footwear appropriate for the terrain
- Weather layer packed if forecast is uncertain
- Small notebook and pen available for the post-session debrief
- Minimum 90 minutes blocked in calendar (not 60 minutes with 30 in transition)
- Hunger and thirst met before entering — physiological discomfort disrupts sensory immersion
- One ANFT invitation selected and held loosely in mind (not rigidly planned)
- PANAS mood worksheet ready to complete before and 20 minutes after the session

## Green Exercise and Outdoor Movement

Design, test, and refine your personal green exercise plan using the dose-response evidence and your individual outcome tracking data.

### Exercise: Green Exercise Activity Mapping

Identify which outdoor movement activities you already do or could realistically add, then classify them into the correct evidence-based tier. This clarifies your current portfolio and reveals the gaps.

- List every outdoor physical activity you currently do, even occasionally. Next to each, estimate the average weekly minutes. Calculate your current total.
- For each activity, classify it honestly as Tier 1 (slow, restorative, cortisol-reducing) or Tier 2 (moderate intensity, fitness-building). Are you heavily weighted to one tier? What does that imbalance suggest about your current stress load or fitness priorities?
- Identify one Tier 1 activity and one Tier 2 activity that you do not currently do but could realistically start within the next two weeks with zero new equipment or significant schedule change.
- Write one implementation intention for each new activity using the exact format: 'When [anchor event], I will [activity] at [named location] for [specific minutes].'

### Worksheet: Weekly Green Exercise Planner

Plan your upcoming week of outdoor sessions across both tiers. Fill this out each Sunday. The goal is a written commitment, not a rigid schedule — adjust in real time, but always substitute rather than cancel.  
Week starting (date)

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Session 1: Day / Time / Location / Tier (1 or 2) / Planned duration

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Session 2: Day / Time / Location / Tier / Planned duration

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Session 3: Day / Time / Location / Tier / Planned duration

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Session 4: Day / Time / Location / Tier / Planned duration

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Session 5: Day / Time / Location / Tier / Planned duration

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Total planned minutes this week

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Minimum viable backup plan if weather disrupts my preferred session

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Which session am I most likely to skip? What will I do instead of skipping?

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### Checklist: End-of-Week Outcome Review Checklist

- Record actual sessions completed vs. planned (number and minutes)
- Calculate total outdoor minutes for the week — did you hit the 120-minute threshold?
- Review morning HRV average for the week — is the 4-week trend rising, flat, or falling?
- Sum PANAS positive affect scores and negative affect scores across all tracked sessions
- Identify the session with the largest positive mood delta — what made it work?
- Identify any session that produced no measurable mood improvement — what was different?
- Update the Location Inventory with any revised restoration ratings
- Set one specific adjustment for next week based on this week's data

## Building a Sustainable Outdoor Routine

Lock in your outdoor wellness habit using barrier analysis, environment design, and your personalised 30-day launch plan.

### Exercise: Barrier Deconstruction and Countermeasure Design

For each barrier, you need a specific countermeasure pre-designed before it strikes — not a general intention. Generic plans fail at the first obstacle. This exercise produces specific, friction-removing countermeasures.

- For each of the five barriers (time scarcity, access, weather, social discomfort, digital pull), rate its current strength in your life on a scale of 1–5. Which is your number-one barrier?
- For your top barrier, write one physical environment change, one schedule change, and one identity-level reframe that together address it. Be completely specific — name the object, the time, the exact phrase.
- Identify one person in your life who you could invite to join one outdoor session per week. Note: social green exercise amplifies mood and self-esteem gains (Barton & Pretty data). What specific session and location would you propose?
- Design your minimum viable session: the absolute floor — minimum duration, nearest acceptable location, minimum conditions — that you commit to maintaining even on the hardest week. Write it as a rule, not a preference.

### Worksheet: 30-Day Nature Immersion Launch Plan

Fill in this structured 4-week ramp before starting your 30-day plan. Review it weekly and record actual vs. planned. Do not fill in the summary row until the week is completed.

Week 1 target: 3 sessions × 15 min = 45 min. My 3 anchor events (specific trigger + location for each)

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Week 1 actual sessions completed

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Week 1 actual total minutes

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Week 1 main obstacle encountered and how I handled it

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Week 2 target: 4 sessions × 20 min = 80 min. New Tier 2 session I am adding (activity + location + day)

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Week 2 actual sessions completed

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Week 2 actual total minutes

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Week 3 target: 5 sessions × 24 min = 120 min. PANAS tracking started (Y/N)

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Week 3 actual sessions completed

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Week 3 actual total minutes

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Week 3 PANAS trend: positive affect rising / flat / falling

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Week 4 target: 5 sessions × 30–40 min incl. one 90-min shinrin-yoku. HRV tracking started (Y/N)

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Week 4 actual sessions completed

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Week 4 actual total minutes

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End-of-30-day review: HRV weekly average at day 30 vs. baseline

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End-of-30-day review: PANAS positive affect average at day 30 vs. day 1

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### Checklist: Habit Consolidation Checklist — Weeks 5 to 8 (Automaticity Phase)

- Continue minimum 120 minutes per week — non-negotiable floor, not a target to optimise
- When a preferred session is disrupted, substitute a minimum viable session rather than skip
- Conduct a monthly 15-minute review of HRV trend and PANAS delta — record findings in the Session Log template
- Rotate your location inventory seasonally — identify one new location each month
- Introduce one new ANFT invitation each month to prevent habituation and maintain sensory engagement
- Evaluate the identity claim quarterly: can you honestly say 'I go outside in nature regularly'?
- Share one insight from your tracking data with one other person — teaching consolidates habit identity
- At week 8 (day 56), revisit your barrier assessment — update the 1–5 ratings and revise

countermeasures accordingly

## Your Action Plan

1. This week: count your actual outdoor minutes from last week honestly — establish your true baseline before the 30-day plan begins
2. Day 1: identify and write down three accessible locations within 15 minutes of home or work that meet the 30% green-cover threshold
3. Day 1: write your first implementation intention using the exact if-then format (anchor event, named location, specific duration)
4. Day 2: complete your first 15-minute outdoor session using airplane mode — no exceptions; note your PANAS positive and negative affect before and after
5. Week 1: set up HRV morning tracking on your wearable or HRV4Training app; record baseline for 7 days before drawing any conclusions
6. Week 1: download the 10-item PANAS short form and the Digit Span Backward app; run both as baselines before your first tracked session
7. Week 2: attempt a full ANFT sit-spot invitation during one session — 10 minutes stationary, closed eyes for half the time, tracking sounds from near to far
8. Week 2: plan your one 90-minute shinrin-yoku session for week 4 — block it in your calendar today before it gets displaced
9. Week 3: fill in the My Forest Bathing Location Inventory for all three of your identified locations — use it to choose sessions by goal rather than by habit
10. End of week 4: review HRV baseline vs. week 4 average, PANAS baseline vs. week 4 delta, and Digit Span Backward baseline vs. most recent score











