

Why walk with a certified *forest therapy guide?*

You already know how to take a walk. A guided forest therapy walk is something else. The pace is slow, the distance is short, and a guide holds the structure so you are free to sense, wander, and rest.

EVERY GUIDED WALK OFFERS THE THREE R'S

Rest.

The pace and shape of the walk make room for a calm that is hard to reach in daily life. Participants often say it feels like permission. Permission to slow down, unplug, and simply be.

Reconnect.

People leave feeling more connected to nature, to others, and to themselves. Some describe a sense of awe, of being part of a living web. Others just say, I feel lighter.

Reciprocate.

Feeling nourished by the land tends to stir a wish to give something back. A tree planted. Litter carried out. A deeper respect held.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

The body

Heart health

Guided forest therapy has been linked to lower blood pressure and reduced heart rate, benefits observed across ages and walks of life. This matters in a time when heart disease remains the leading cause of death and disability worldwide.

Stress

Studies show forest therapy can lower cortisol, the body's stress hormone. Levels drop after time in the forest, and stay lower than in urban settings. Less cortisol means more ease, and more resilience for whatever daily life brings.



The forest does the work. The guide makes room for it.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

The mind

Sleep

Forest therapy can lengthen sleep and improve its quality.

Mood

The practice supports mental health by easing anxiety, stress, and low moods, while making room for calm, positive emotion, and satisfaction with life.

A GUIDE IS TRAINED TO DO FOUR THINGS

- ① **Hold a safe and welcoming space**, so you can arrive fully.
 - ① **Offer invitations** that deepen sensory awareness and connection.
 - ① **Pace the walk** so the mind can settle and the noise can fall away.
 - ① **Tend reciprocity**, the balance of receiving from the land and giving back.
-

A guided walk is more than a pleasant stroll in the woods. It is a structured, research-supported practice that eases stress, supports the heart, improves sleep, lifts mood, and returns you to yourself.

Forest therapy is a nature-based wellness practice, not a substitute for mental health care.

REFERENCES

- Antonelli et al. (2019). Effects of forest bathing (shinrin-yoku) on levels of cortisol as a stress biomarker: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Biometeorology*, 63, 1117–1134. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31001682/>
- Garibay-Chávez, M. G., Curiel-Ballesteros, A., García de Alba-García, J., Borja-Arreola, M., Moreno-Ramírez, D., & Santos-Zamora, E. (2024). Effects of forest bathing on blood pressure and heart rate in older adults in Mexico. *Forests*, 15(7), 1254. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382412058_Effects_of_Forest_Bathing_on_Blood_Pressure_and_Heart_Rate_in_Older_Adults_in_Mexico
- Hansen et al. (2017). Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) and nature therapy: A state-of-the-art review. *Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(8), 1–48. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5580555/>
- Rajoo, K. S., Karam, D. S., & Abdullah, M. Z. (2020). The physiological and psychosocial effects of forest therapy: A systematic review. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 54. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341919156_The_Physiological_and_Psychosocial_Effects_of_Forest_Therapy_A_Systematic_Review
- Timko Olson, E. R., Hansen, M. M., & Vermeesch, A. (2020). Mindfulness and Shinrin-yoku: Potential for physiological and psychological interventions during uncertain times. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(24), 1–13. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33327407/>
- Tsunetsugu et al. (2010). Trends in research related to “Shinrin-yoku” (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing) in Japan. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 15, 27–37. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2793347/>
- Twohig-Bennett & Jones (2018). The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. *Environmental Research*, 166, 628–637. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935118303323>
- Wen, Y., Yan, Q., Pan, Y. et al. (2019). Medical empirical research on forest bathing (Shinrin-yoku): A systematic review. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 24(70), 1–21. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6886167/>

Tamara Schmidt

Certified forest therapy guide (ANFT) · Herbalist · Life coach
Member of Nature and Forest Therapy of Canada

WALKS Thursdays · Centre de la nature, Cowansville
fleurbain.com · natureforesttherapycanada.org



NATURE AND
FOREST THERAPY
OF CANADA



SYLVOTHÉRAPIE
ET INTERVENTIONS PAR
LA NATURE DU CANADA



BOOK A WALK