

The Health Benefits of Nature: Introduction to the Special Section

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This special section of *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being* brings together four original articles at the intersection of the environment and well-being. As a field of inquiry, positive psychology cuts across disciplinary boundaries to encompass many fields, including psychology, sociology, economics, and public health. The articles in this special section underscore the importance of environmental psychology for this interdisciplinary agenda. Whether the forms and structures within which people interact are human-made or natural, the environment is crucial to the development, maintenance, and expression of human potentials. The environment, both built and natural, can promote social interaction, community cohesion, and mental health. Features of the built environment (e.g. bicycle paths, tree-lined streets, community gardens) and natural environment (e.g. natural landscapes, habitats, and wildlife) can also promote physical health by spurring physical activity. Finally, the environment can be conducive to mental health by reducing mental fatigue and replenishing vital resources that have been depleted by stress. Environmental psychology will continue to play an important role in our understanding of human health and well-being. This special section spotlights some of the noteworthy work to date that will, we hope, stimulate new investigations.