

By Lacy Wolff, ERS Health Promotion Administrator



Nature

Never before in the history of humans have we spent so much time in our homes, cars, and offices. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, on average we spend 90% of our time indoors. Spending more time in nature can lower stress, build stronger communities, and help us to manage and prevent chronic health conditions. Connecting with nature doesn't have to be complicated, but it does require a little bit of planning. This month, we are focusing on the health benefits of being outside and ways to get outside, including:

- Checking out your local and state parks. A simple Google search “parks near me” will show you what parks are available near you. Spending some time sitting on a park bench along the waterside, picnicking with your family, or walking on a nature trail can sooth your nervous system and energize your soul!
- Situating your workspace near a window so you can look outside regularly. Natural light and view of the sky, grass, trees, birds, and whatever else is around your home or office can be a healthy distraction and may boost your creativity when you feel stuck.
- Joining us for a webinar featuring biologist, author, and outdoor educator Heather Kuhlken, founder of [Families in Nature](#), to learn innovative ways to connect with nature on June 30th. From 10-11 a.m. CST. Learn more and register through the [ERS Wellness Events Calendar](#).



Men's Health

Only 36% men who participate in ERS-administered health plans saw their doctor for an annual preventive visit in the past 12 months. Among the many reasons why men skip this no-cost preventive screening are fear and uncertainty, lack of time or motivation, and simply the absence of a symptom to indicate the need to go. On average, men die five years younger than women and are more likely to die prematurely from preventable causes, like chronic liver disease and suicide. What can we do?

- If you are a man, think about your family, friends and colleagues and schedule a preventive exam for yourself and for them. To get the care you need, be honest with your doctor when asked how you are feeling emotionally and physically.
- If you have a man in your family whom you care for, nudge them and/or schedule the appointment for them, or perhaps schedule your exams at the same clinic at the same time and have a lunch date before or after! Make a day of it.
- Talk about mental health. Reaching out for help is an act of courage in a world that has conditioned men to think the opposite. If you are a man who has received help for mental health issues, talking about your experience can help to destigmatize this important issue and may be the catalyst to save someone's life. Gregg F. Martin, a retired major general of the U.S. Army has made his [new mission to combat the stigma](#).
- Join us for a conversation on **Men's Health and Human Performance** on June 24 from 10-11 a.m. CST, featuring Russell Frohardt, Ph.D., from Alamo College. All genders are encouraged to attend this informative session! Learn more and register through the [ERS Wellness Events Calendar](#).