



## Wellness Through Nature - Movement and Meditation Programs

### Intended Audience

For all members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

### Program Description

Outdoor programs offer an exalting blend of fresh air, exercise, visual stimulation and companionship as members embark on facilitator-led excursions to explore and be inspired by nature. Wellspring Calgary facilitators help you see life and nature in new ways and with heightened senses, taking in the quiet presence of wildlife, experiencing the magnitude of the wilderness and connecting with the struggle of nature's flora and fauna. Wellspring Calgary programs provide a broad spectrum of exercise and mindfulness opportunities, ranging from peaceful strolls, to purposeful gardening, to invigorating hiking and cross-country skiing.

### Benefits and Impact

- connect with self in an outdoor setting
- connect with the natural world
- gain confidence and fitness in a range of physical activities
- increase movement which can enhance mood, appetite and rest
- feel a sense of support in a non-traditional setting from others who have experienced cancer

### What to Expect at a Session

Members can expect to feel enlivened and refreshed when they participate in any of the outdoor programs offered at Wellspring Calgary. All programs are led by expert facilitators who understand that health, friendship and nurturing encounters with nature are primary objectives of these programs. Exercise ranges from gentle to moderate, offering a gratifying experience for members at any level. Equipment is provided when needed.

### Participant Comments

*"Connecting with nature is rejuvenating."*

*"Always a boost: physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually."*

*"Very refreshing in this season of grief."*

*"(Physical activities) relieve stress and worries."*

### Related Programs:

Bird Strolls  
Community Garden  
Cross-Country Skiing  
Fly Fishing  
Mindful Mountain Hiking  
Snowshoeing  
Urban Walks

### What the Research Says:

In a study by Berman et al. 2008, it was found that healthy participants who were outdoors for one hour showed improved attention and memory. In a separate study, researchers found that hospital patients looking at plants and gardens experienced a perceived improvement in their health. Currently, some hospital cancer centers encourage their patients to spend time outdoors to reap the physical and mental health benefits of nature. Still, the exact mechanisms and reasons it is beneficial are still largely unknown. In a 2013 study, cancer patients were interviewed to understand the role of nature in their recovery process. Two main themes were the ability of nature to connect the patients with their personal life stories, and the ability of nature to create positive thoughts and feelings.

(Berman M, Jonides J, Kaplan S. 2008. The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychological Science*, 19(12): 1207-1212.)  
(Garry D, Mason T. 2013. Change of Scenery: Just What the Doctor Ordered. *Patient Safety and Quality Healthcare*.)  
(Timmermann C, Uhrenfeldt L, Birkelund R. 2012. Cancer patients and positive sensory impressions in the hospital environment – a qualitative interview study. *European Journal of Cancer Care*. 22(1): 117-124.)

### FOR FURTHER RESEARCH LINK, CLICK HERE:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11509056>  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2649702/>

### Program Frequency:

**2 hours** per week  
**2-8 weeks** per program  
**2-4 programs** per session  
Winter, spring/summer, fall  
Optimum class size: 8-16