



## Invest in Your Wellness with Wellness Works®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive newsletter focusing on your biggest and most personal asset – wellness.

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### Spending Time in Nature to Boost Wellness

Many employees spend much of the day indoors, seated and connected to screens. While technology is essential to modern work, the human nervous system still benefits from physical movement, sensory variety, and moments of calm.

Whether it's a walk through a local park, a few quiet minutes outside during the workday, gardening after hours, or holding a walking meeting on a tree-lined path, exposure to natural environments can support both personal well-being and organizational health. This makes nature-based wellness a practical, low-cost way to encourage stress management, movement, and mental reset.

#### What's Driving the Need

Workplace stress and sedentary routines challenge employee well-being. Lost productivity and increased health care costs from workplace stress cost U.S. employers more than \$180 billion a year. Many people move from screen-based work to screen-based personal time, leaving fewer opportunities for physical movement, fresh air, or quiet reflection.

[Research has linked time in nature with improvements in mood, mental health, emotional well-being, and attention span.](#)

#### Potential Benefits for the Workplace

Spending time in nature doesn't need to mean a remote trail hike or a full day outdoors. Urban parks, gardens, green courtyards, and even blue spaces such as lakes or rivers may offer restorative value.

People who spend even a short time in nature were more likely to report good health and higher well-being. The time could be spread across the week rather than completed all at once.

[Time outdoors can support wellness](#) in many ways, including:

- *Stress relief:* Natural settings may help employees shift out of a state of constant demand and into a more restorative rhythm.
- *Movement:* Parks, trails, and outdoor spaces can encourage walking and light activity.
- *Mood and morale:* Even brief outdoor experiences may offer a sense of calm, perspective, or renewal during a demanding day.
- *Connection:* Outdoor spaces can create opportunities for informal conversation, walking meetings, or team volunteer activities.

These benefits are especially valuable because they don't require a complex program to begin. A nature-based wellness strategy can start with small adjustments to the workday and grow over time.

## How HR Can Support Nature-Based Wellness

HR doesn't need to prescribe a specific activity. The goal is to create a culture where restorative outdoor time is seen as acceptable, accessible, and aligned with well-being.

Consider simple practices such as:

- Encouraging outdoor breaks when weather, safety, and job duties allow.
- Offering walking meetings for one-on-one conversations or small groups.
- Sharing local park, trail, or green space resources as part of wellness communications.
- Creating outdoor-friendly wellness challenges that focus on participation, not competition.
- Supporting volunteer days tied to community gardens, park cleanups, or environmental stewardship.
- Evaluating whether outdoor spaces near the workplace are welcoming, shaded, accessible, and easy to use.

For remote and hybrid employees, nature-based wellness can be adapted through flexible prompts: stepping outside between meetings, taking a short walk before the workday, eating lunch outdoors, or adding plants and natural light to your workplace, where possible.

## A Note on Accessibility

Nature-based wellness should be framed with flexibility. Some employees may live in areas without easy access to parks. Others may face safety concerns, mobility limitations, caregiving schedules, allergies, or seasonal weather barriers.

Inclusive messaging matters. Rather than suggesting that everyone “go hike” or spend long periods outside, offer a range of options: sitting near a window, visiting a neighborhood garden, listening to natural sounds, tending a plant, walking a short loop, or spending a few minutes outside during daylight.

The most effective wellness programs reduce pressure. They invite participation without adding another obligation.

## Getting Started

The first step is to identify how nature can be added to the existing work rhythm. This could be a weekly walking meeting, a “step outside” reminder when weather permits, or a manager toolkit with ideas for outdoor-friendly breaks.

The message is straightforward: employees need moments of recovery to sustain energy, engagement, and performance. Time in nature is one accessible way to support that recovery.

A few minutes outside won't solve every workplace challenge, but it can help create a healthier pattern to pause, breathe, move, and reconnect with the world beyond the screen.

## Book Review | Making the Case for Nature as Everyday Wellness

Spending time in nature is often treated as a personal preference, something enjoyable but separate from the demands of daily work. [\*Nature and the Mind: The Science of How Nature Improves Cognitive, Physical, and Social Well-Being\*](#) by Marc Berman takes a broader view, presenting nature as a meaningful part of the way people think, feel, recover, and connect.

Berman, founder and director of the Environmental Neuroscience Lab at the University of Chicago, explores how natural environments influence attention, mood, physical health, and social well-being.

Nature is presented as a practical support system that can be integrated into everyday routines. For employees navigating busy schedules, screen-heavy work, and constant mental demands, that message feels especially relevant.

### Book Highlights

One of the book's strengths is its focus on the connection between environment and well-being. Berman explains how natural settings can help restore attention, support emotional balance, and create space for the mind to recover from overstimulation.

Berman also looks beyond individual wellness. Nature is presented as something that can influence physical and social well-being, including how communities are shaped.

Another helpful feature is the idea of a “nature prescription.” Berman emphasizes accessible ways to interact with nature. This may include walking outdoors, spending time near trees or water, bringing natural elements into daily routines, or simply becoming more intentional about time outside.

### A Key Takeaway

One of the book's most important messages is that nature can be a simple but meaningful tool for supporting well-being. It doesn't require expensive equipment, complicated planning, or a major change in routine. Even small moments outdoors can help create a sense of reset during a busy day.

For employers, the takeaway is not that nature should replace other wellness efforts. Instead, it can complement them. Encouraging walking meetings, outdoor breaks, access to natural light, or more thoughtful use of green spaces can help employees build small recovery moments into the workday.

*Nature and the Mind* offers a research-based, yet approachable look at why natural environments matter. For readers interested in employee wellness, it provides a helpful reminder that supporting well-being is not always about adding more programs. Sometimes, it starts with making space for people to step outside, slow down, and reconnect with the world around them.

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