

Being beside the seaside is good for you

19 April 2012

Exercise in the open air is good for you, but if you want to reap the full benefits you should head for the coast or the countryside rather than an urban park.

That is the conclusion of research by Katherine Ashbullby and Dr Mathew White from the European Centre for Environment and [Human Health](#) (ECEHH), Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, and the School of Psychology, University of Plymouth. Mathew White is presenting the findings today (19 April) to the British Psychological Society Annual Conference held at the Grand Connaught Rooms, London (18-20 April).

Katherine Ashbullby and her colleagues from the two institutions studied data from 2750 English respondents drawn from Natural England's two-year study of people's engagement with the natural environment. They looked at people who had visited urban parks, the countryside and the coast.

They found that all outdoor locations were associated with positive feelings (enjoyment, calmness, refreshment), but that visits to the coast were most beneficial and visits to urban parks least beneficial. This finding remained when the researchers took account of factors like people's age, how far they had travelled, the presence of others and the activity they undertook.

Dr White, a lecturer in health and risk from the ECEHH, says: "There is a lot of work on the beneficial effects of visiting [natural environments](#), but our findings suggest it is time to move beyond a simple urban vs rural debate and start looking at the effect that different natural environments have on people's health and well-being."

Provided by The Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry

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