

Living near green space may make for a healthier you

April 2 2018



(HealthDay)—Planning a move in the future? You might want to make

sure there are parks nearby.

Research suggests that people who live near parks and [green space](#) are happier and healthier.

For instance, one study in the journal *Health & Place* looked at the relationship between parks and various health factors among women in the United States and Australia.

Australian women with more parks near their home were more likely to meet [physical activity guidelines](#) and less likely to be overweight or obese. American women who lived near parks were less likely to watch TV four or more hours a day.

In both countries, living near parks was also linked to a lower [body mass index](#) (BMI), a ratio of weight to height.

Mental health also seems to benefit from time spent in parks and similar green spaces.

A separate study in *Health & Place* found that the more time people spent in green spaces, the higher their scores on scales that assessed [mental health](#) and vitality.

Of course, you don't have to live next to a park to reap the benefits. Moving to a greenbelt area isn't always possible.

It should be possible, though, to regularly visit parks and green areas within a reasonable distance of your home.

- Check with your community's recreation department, or stop by city hall, to learn about area parks and trails.
- Check your state government's website for similar information.

- Check out the Nature Conservancy website (nature.org) to find protected areas in your region that are open to visitors.

And when you're ready for a bigger adventure, go to findyourpark.com. The website is sponsored by the U.S. National Park Service and the National Park Foundation. It has state-by-state information on [national parks](#).

There might be some closer than you think.

More information: The National Recreation and Park Association has more on the [health benefits of green space](#).

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Citation: Living near green space may make for a healthier you (2018, April 2) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-04-green-space-healthier.html>

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