

# Powerful Practices

## **Reducing stress while improving health**

We have been restricted in some way shape or form due to COVID 19 for over a year now. After chatting with a client about working from home (WFH), we reflected on 'normal' stress reducers but if our normal ways of reducing stress like, going out with friends, perhaps to the pub, the gym, a restaurant or just popping by for a cup of tea (I'm British if that didn't give it away!) what can we do?

### **GET OUTSIDE**

For some, our connection to nature has been slowly eroded with more and more urban areas, especially if you are living in a city. But I challenge you to find some green area or blue that you can spend some time walking, sitting, just being in. I live in Singapore and my view at home, although beautiful, is another high rise building. During circuit breaker, at lunch time I would head out for about 40mins to walk towards Fort Canning Park. I didn't realise then but some of the reasons I felt ready to take on the afternoon and less stressed after are well documented.

As long as you feel safe in your environment, being in nature has the following benefits and more

- Reduces blood pressure and heart rate
- Reduces muscle tension
- Reduces the production of stress hormones
- Improves feelings of well-being
- Reduces feelings of anxiety and depression

How quickly can I feel good? According to White, *et al.*, (2019) 120 minutes. Either all at once or spread out. It is also great for our kids health and learning. Richard Louv in 2005 even coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder as children were spending less time in nature.

Can't get out of the house? Set up a comfortable seating arrangement near a window if you have a natural view, but if like me you don't, I have a video on my phone from a trip to the beach with just the wind and the waves. It's not ideal but it makes me smile.

Want to help the environment at the same time? Go litter picking or join a beach clean up.

Whether it's walking, a picnic, taking the dog out or braving the elements, we have everything we need already, plus nature is free!

But just because it is simple, doesn't make it easy. Look out for the next Powerful Practice and let me know how this one goes for you.

