

National Park Week



What is National Park Week?

National Park Week is a celebration and recognition of our National Parks and this year it will be observed from Sunday, April 14 through Saturday, April 20, 2024. The National Park Service states, "Your National Parks are living examples of the best this Nation has to offer-our magnificent natural landscapes and our varied yet interrelated heritage. Parks can provide recreational experiences, opportunities to learn and grow, and places of quiet refuge."

Find a National Park event!

Free National Park Entrance Days!

Resources:

- [National Park Service](#)
- [UC Davis Health: 3 ways getting outside into nature helps improve your health](#)
- [Right as Rain by UW Medicine: How Going Outside Can Benefit Your Health](#)
- [Harvard T.H. Chan: Spend time outdoors. It'll improve your health, say experts](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Benefits of Physical Activity](#)

Benefits of the Great Outdoors:

According to [UC Davis Health](#), nature can:

- Improve our thinking, reasoning and other mental abilities (our minds and bodies relax in nature and it can also boost our creative and problem-solving abilities!).
- Improve our physical wellness by walking, biking, hiking and more.
- Nature can also reduce our cortisol levels, the demands on our cardiovascular systems (lower heart rate/blood pressure), and increase our Vitamin D level.
- Improve our mental health by decreasing our anxiety, lessen stress, and even help us sleep better.
- Green spaces have also been linked to lower risks of depression and improve concentration and attention.
- UW Medicine shared that outdoor time even benefits children in areas of mental health and may also be crucial for normal eye development.
- Heather Eliassen, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#) noted the following benefits: "improvements in sleep, blood pressure, cognitive function and physical activity, as well as reduced risks of chronic disease, such as type 2."

Adventure Awaits:

- Visit a local, state or national park.
- Discover a community garden or start your own garden.
- Plan a picnic with friends or family.
- Go on a hike (pick a new trail).
- Play games outside with your kids or kids in your care (you can even read books by a shady tree).
- Visit the ocean, mountains or rain forest.
- Start a walking club or join one.
- Lay and watch the stars or clouds.
- See what outdoor activities your community offers.

www.dshs.wa.gov/fwb

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