

Feeling blue? Act green!

It seems that watching wildlife shows, exploring parks and gardens, looking at fabulous mountain and ocean views, and getting away from it all to the bush are not only pleasurable, but are actually good for us!

Eminent biologists, psychologists and health professionals are showing that contact with nature – whether through parks, natural bush, pets or farm animals – helps us recover from stress and mental fatigue, helps us relax and puts us in a good frame of mind.

Of course, most of us know this intuitively and it's probably why we are drawn to nature instinctively. We all know that a walk on the beach, down a bush track or in a park is good to clear the head when we feel a little tired or stressed.

So, next time you are feeling like a lift, 'act green': do some gardening, pat the cat or dog, take a walk around the park or head down to the water for some time out.

Better still, don't wait until you're tired or feeling flat. Act green more often. Being in touch with nature makes us feel good, builds good mental health and helps beat the blues. And it's as easy as A-B-C.

Act – do some gardening; take a walk around the local park; watch a wildlife documentary; take time to watch the sunset; spend time with pets...

Belong – get a group together for a picnic in a natural setting; visit a wildlife sanctuary with friends; join a hiking group...

Commit – become a 'civic environmentalist'; join a tree planting group; volunteer to keep your local parks & gardens clean; take up orienteering; learn more about ecology; offer to take a home-bound person out to a park...

Being active, having a sense of belonging, and having a purpose in life all contribute to happiness and good mental health.

For counselling services call Lifeline on 1300 13 11 14

