

6 WAYS TO CULTIVATE YOUR RESILIENCE TODAY

Describing these as challenging times is an understatement – especially for women. Hard-working professional women are bearing the brunt of extra domestic and caregiving responsibilities in this era of full or partial working and schooling at home for many. That is if you're a lucky one with a steady job. Perhaps you're on the frontlines risking your own health caring for others. Happiness might seem an elusive ideal at this soul-trying moment.

Yet, there's cause for hope. A new study from the *Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Lab* at University of North Carolina finds we can experience happiness even during extraordinarily difficult times like these. We've heard about the importance of being resilient – having the inner strength adapt to life's inevitable misfortunes and quickly bouncing back vs. falling apart. Turns out resilient folks see past setbacks to feel love, gratitude, joy and hope - *even* when stressed, anxious, lonely or depressed - and yes, in the middle of a pandemic and social turbulence. And there's more good news: research says resilience isn't a fixed trait that we either have or don't – we can grow it.

So How Do We Cultivate Resilience?

Seems the old “put your own mask on first” wisdom really has legs. UNC researchers found these actions take us there:

1. Self-Care
2. Spiritual Activities
3. Exercise
4. Authentically connecting with others (not just texting)
5. Limiting passive browsing time on social media
6. Being kind and helpful

...things we sometimes jettison when the going gets tough. And they emphasized the more stressed, anxious, lonely or depressed we are, the more it matters to take time to care for ourselves. While we may dream of a lovely massage, self-care retreat or spa weekend, we know that's not likely to happen soon for all kinds of reasons.

Mother Nature to the Rescue



Sometimes you just *know* something works, and it feels great when science confirms you're onto a good thing. My stress buster of choice has always been unplugged time in nature. It checks the research boxes for self-care, spiritual nourishment and exercise. And if a friend joins me for a hike, it's a perfect way to nurture connection. When everything else is spinning out of control, an hour pulling weeds and listening to birds in the garden can bring me back to center and my own wisdom. And I'm told I glow after a long forest walk that regenerates my balance. Have you experienced some replenishing time in nature lately?

A multitude of studies “point in one direction: Nature is not only nice to have, but it's a have-to-have for physical health and cognitive function” according to a Yale article. Less than 20 minutes a day (or two hours a week) in nature can lower blood pressure and



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stress hormone levels, reduce nervous system arousal, enhance immune system function, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and improve mood. Yes please. And as little as a 5-minute mini nature break is beneficial.

Where to Start?

Maybe you feel a bit disconnected from nature and not sure how to squeeze some green into your already crazy-busy daily mix? And you're so not ready for a major hiking expedition? You don't need to be. Ever.

Start simple. Take a few minutes today to just "be" in nature.

Here are some ideas for easing a soul soothing nature fix into your routine:



Get Your Vitamin N

10 Resilience-Boosting "Nature Rx" Mini Doses

1. Enjoy your morning coffee/tea on the deck
2. Watch the sunrise or sunset
3. Take a short stroll in a greenspace
4. Lie on a blanket and look at the clouds or stargaze
5. Snap a few mindful photos of a flower, tree or the sky
6. Relax on a park bench and observe your surroundings with all your senses
7. Install a hummingbird feeder, bird feeder or bird bath where you can see it
8. Picnic Lite – Enjoy a snack outdoors/in your yard
9. Nurture a potted plant – Perhaps herbs to delight your inner chef
10. Sit comfortably under a tree and close your eyes. Listen.

We all need you at your strong and resilient best – especially now. Your well-being truly matters.

So, consider prioritizing some nature time to cultivate your resilience super-powers. Get grounded, rediscover your center and refresh your spirit.

And most of all, thanks for everything you do to make our world a better place.

Stay safe and be well,

Cynthia

"We all want quiet. We all want beauty...
We all need space. Unless we have it, we cannot reach
that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently."

~ Octavia Hill, 1883
Co-founder of the National Trust (UK National Park Service)

