Fit Green Happy ™ Annotated Bibliography


Physical activity and happiness. This article explores the relationship between physical activity and depressive symptoms in women. Even small amounts of physical activity have been found to lower depressive symptoms in young women.


Nature and happiness. Physical activity and happiness. This study concluded that green exercise had immediate short term effects on mood and self-esteem. They noted that water spaces had a greater effect. This data can be used for therapeutic interventions in private practices, by health care providers, and by employers.


Physical activity and fitness. Nutrition can impact mental health. Nutritional deficiencies can explain irregularity in our emotions.


Barriers. Identifies exercise as a source of stress and therefore a barrier to fitness. It suggests to carefully design physical activity programs to reach obese populations to help them learn to enjoy the process of exercising. This article also defines the factors concomitant with the inactivity/obesity cycle such as anxiety, decreased energy, depression, fatigue, stress, and low self-esteem.


Nature and happiness. This study found that people with major depressive disorder (MDD) experienced cognitive and affective improvements after walking in a natural environment. MDD is defined as having cognitive impairments, compromised working memory, and persistent negative moods. This study also discusses the benefits of attention restoration theory (ART), and how nature can be combined with this type of therapy. Evidence from this study also suggested that people with depressive symptoms may benefit more from the restorative effects of nature than healthy individuals.


Nature and happiness. This study used the Sustained Attention to Response Test to explore the impacts of restorative (nature) and nonrestorative images on attentional capacity. It found that participants who viewed restorative images experienced an increase in attentional capacity.


Defining happiness. This study looked at the relationship between positive psychological well-being (PPWB), and cardiovascular disease (CVD). The article noted that the connection between mental health and physical health has been recognized for a long time. The study concluded that PPWB is directly related to cardiovascular health.


Historical context. This Teddy Roosevelt biography focuses on his relationship with nature and protectionist actions throughout his political career. It is useful in giving insight into his appreciation for nature.


Implications. This news article looks at programs that the National Park Service has implemented to reach out to underrepresented populations.


Nature and happiness. This study connects how stress, resilience, and contact with nature in school reduces stress and improves protective factors for resilience in children and adolescents. Research has found that children and adolescents experience health benefits, better physical activity and abilities, better social health, better mental health, reduced stress, and enhanced self-confidence. There have been more studies with adults that show that green spaces have physical and mental health benefits, but recent research on children have found that the results parallel studies completed with adults. Benefits for adolescents include, more energy, happiness, less stress, and less anger. Preschool children experience lower measures of forgetfulness and better listening. High school students have fewer criminal behaviors, significantly higher graduation rates, merit awards, and plans to attend college. Additionally gardening programs in schools increase the likelihood that children will eat fruits and vegetables, as well as improving science scores.


Barriers. Two fitness center built in urban settings with low month to month rates in attempt to remove barriers such as cost, disability, inaccessibility, and safe locations. It started out strong, but experienced attrition rates increasing each month.


Historical context. In comparing European colonists’ interactions with nature and
wilderness to those of the Native Americans, Cronon provides a nice commentary on how Native Americans’ utilized the land and their relationship with nature.


Barriers. This article explores the association between physical activity and mental health issues. It argues for the existence of a bidirectional relationship – physical activity lowers risk for anxiety and depressive symptoms; however, these mental health issues can also put individuals at risk of not partaking in the benefits of fitness.


Historical context. This includes a Sioux Indian’s perspective of how Native Americans interacted (and continue to interact) with the land.


Defining happiness. Subjective well-being (SWB) includes optimism, low anger, and work satisfaction. This article discussed how there is evidence that concludes that SWB influences health and longevity. Positive psychological well-being has also been found to lower mortality in both healthy and diseased individuals.


Defining happiness. This article defines subjective well-being and explores reasons why happiness is important, including its positive impact on health.

Defining happiness. Describes Subjective well-being with regard to organizational psychology, culture, benefits, and interventions. Discusses factors that affect long-term subjective well-being.


Historical context. This source, along with the Emerson essays mentioned below, provides.


Barriers. This study uses census data from one Midwestern city to categorize neighborhoods according to their income level. It then uses information obtained through Internet sources, school officials, and the parks department to explore how accessibility to physical activity resources differs among neighborhoods.


Physical activity and happiness. They measured long-term physical activity and changes in unhappiness and suggest a long-term association between the two. However, happiness is a self-generalized evaluation and activity levels were self-reported. All they claim is
that there might be a decrease in likelihood of future unhappiness.


Lindsay and Blakiston.

Historical context. This includes commentary on Penn’s relationship with nature and protection efforts within Philadelphia.


Nature and happiness. This article discusses the history of Friluftsliv in Scandinavian countries, which translates to, “free air life.” This is a philosophical lifestyle based on “experiences of the freedom in nature and the spiritual connectedness with the landscape.” This philosophy has been reflected throughout Scandinavian history, dating back to the 18th century during a nature movement. The upper class did not have a relationship to nature like the lower classes did because they did not hunt, fish, or farm. Friluftsliv became a romanticism ideal to reconnect with nature and the old Scandinavian outdoor tradition. Later, Friluftsliv was used during wartime to, “foster strong people for defense.” In more recent times, Frilutsframjandet is a Swedish outdoor organization whose goals are to foster good health through outdoor nature experiences.


Barriers. This article examines the barriers to physical activity cited by college students.


Nature and happiness. This article discusses how natural environments restore well-being, and how natural environments have restorative stress-recovery in terms of allostatic load (allostatic load is the wear and tear on the body caused by repeated or
chronic stress). Additionally, leisure time in natural and/or green environments has many health benefits, including a positive effect on disease prevalence and lower mortality rates. Physical activity in green spaces is a great resource for reducing stress, lowering burnout syndrome, obesity, and heart conditions. Shinrin-Yoku was also discussed as having additional psychological parameters that can add to the benefits of being outdoors.


Physical activity and happiness. This article identifies some links between physical activity and improved health. It also highlights some connections to psychological well-being.


Nature and happiness. They suggest that an inability to periodically renew one’s capacity to focus may impair work performance and interpersonal relations. Environmental strategies for health promotion that improve opportunities for restoration can offset limitations of individual-based behavioral change approaches and they complement approaches focused on mitigating stressor exposure. For example, they found that blood pressure decreased in individuals that went into a windowed room, but increased in people who went to a room without windows.


Historical context. This article gives insight into Muir’s relationship with nature and his protectionist approach.

Izenstark, D., Oswald, R., Holman, E., Mendez, S., & Greder, K. (2016). Rural, low-income mothers’ use of family-based nature activities to promote family health. *Journal of*

Nature and happiness. This article explores studies which look at the impact of windows in the workplace. It found that the presence of a view which includes some limited nature scenes provide increased attentional restoration.


Nature and happiness. This article discussed the benefits of nature, and how nature has the ability to restore attentional capacities.


Historical context. This article examines Quakers’ relationship with nature and gives important insight into the value they found in wilderness.


Physical activity and happiness. Nutrition’s impact on mental health. They found that nutritional therapies can help promote positive mental health and happy moods. Nutrient rich foods can be responsible for the production of neurotransmitters that affect mood.


Barriers. This article explores the idea of perceived access and the impact it has on physical activity among individuals. Its findings indicate that increased access to fitness facilities is significantly associated with increased physical activity.

Physical activity and happiness. Studied depressive symptoms in older adult Finnish men and women. The longitudinal study determined that a decrease in regular physical activity may be related to an increase in depressive symptoms over time.


Barriers. This study explores barriers to exercise cited by patients with type 1 diabetes.


Physical activity and happiness. Research shows that you generally, “feel better,” after exercising. This study did not come to any definite conclusions, but it did discuss how mental health and well-being are, “likely,” to work in a synergistic way to make people feel better. (Not a strong article)


Physical activity and happiness. Self-reported physical activity significantly related to mental health with no such association between mental health and aerobic activity.

Nature and happiness. This study used a phone app to collect data throughout the day using GPS and controlled for weather, daylight, companionship, location type, and time of day. They found that the participants are significantly and substantively happier outdoors in all green or natural habitat types than they are in urban settings. However, a limitation with this study is that people generally choose environments and activities based on mood. Additionally, participants were iPhone users who tend to be younger, richer, and more likely to be in education or employment.


Nature and happiness. This article discussed how there is not a clear definition of what a natural environment is. Different fields have varying definitions of what they consider to be a natural environment; some consider only wilderness areas that are relatively untouched by man to be natural, while others may consider a park in an urban area to be a natural environment. The study concluded by stating that defining what makes a natural environment is complex, and that further research on this topic is needed.


Historical context. This essay, along with the four following Muir sources, clearly illustrates Muir’s perspective that nature and its restorative effects is something to be valued and protected.


Historical context. Great commentary on Transcendentalists’ relationship with nature and idea of the presence of divine within it.


Historical context. Nice overview of changing perspectives about nature throughout early American history.


Defining happiness. This article argues for consideration of well-being in policy making and for periodic evaluations of policies to determine whether they are having their intended effect.


Nature and happiness. Shinrin-Yoku is a term meaning, “forest bathing,” that was coined in 1982 by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture when the realization that coming into contact with nature improves mental and physical relaxation. This article discussed how urban settings increase stress, and how natural environments can increase health. Forest environments lower concentrations of cortisol, lower pulse rate, lower blood pressure, increase parasympathetic nerve activity, lower sympathetic nerve activity as compared to urban settings. One study that the article discussed found that blood glucose levels lowered when diabetic patients took a walk in a forest. Additionally, the article discusses how, “forest medicine,” could be developed as a measure of preventative medicine technique.


Physical activity and happiness. Since positive psychology is still fairly new, its link to good physical health is not established. Positive psychology health assets identified by this team include positive emotions, optimism and positive relationships, are prospectively associated with good health, though they do not claim causality.


Historical context. Provides insight in Penn’s views on nature and includes a great quotation about his preference for being in nature and the opportunity it provides for “contemplation.”


Physical activity and happiness. Used to critique the Lampinen, P., Heikkinen, R., & Ruoppila, I. article.


Physical Activity and Happiness. Used to understand the federal recommendations for dosage of physical activity and its relation to mental health.


Defining happiness. This article investigated studies that used measures that contain items that assess with positive affect (PA). Higher levels of health PA have been shown to be correlated with better health behaviors, such as improving sleep quality. PA has also been shown to alter a person’s disease susceptibility. Additionally, PA was found to help
individuals recover from stress-related activation.


Historical context. This book, along with the following Roosevelt sources, provides insight in Roosevelt’s relationship with nature.


Defining happiness. This article discusses how the automatic nervous system (ANS) is the main channel of transmission for the effects of happiness on health. The study found that well-being positively impacts health outcomes, and that healthy people are more likely to live in a healthy way, meaning that they engage in more sports, watch their weight, avoid unhealthy behaviors (such as drinking, smoking, and overeating), and are less likely to commit suicide. The study concluded that, “happiness was found to be the best predictor of health in all stages of the analysis.”


Barriers. This study examines barriers to fitness, as well as interventions which promote healthy changes.


Barriers. This article examines the barriers to fitness among adults and discusses different
relevant theories to understanding these barriers.


Barriers. This article explores some of the barriers to fitness for individuals. It uses focus groups of immigrants to gain a better understanding of these barriers, which include self-esteem, gender, socioeconomic status, limited opportunities, time, stress, etc.


Physical activity and happiness. Neurological explanation of how mental health is impacted from physical activity through the release of neurotransmitters responsible for mood. Additionally, the video provided a firsthand account of how Suzuki benefited from incorporated regular exercise into her routine.


Physical activity and happiness. This article explores the association between physical activity and reduced risks of depression. It found that even 20-60 minutes of exercise a week can lower depression.


Historical context. These writings, along with Thoreau writings listed below, are a great source to explore some of Thoreau’s thoughts about nature, including his belief that it possessed restorative propertis.


Barriers. This article complicates the one-dimensional link between physical activity and happiness. It calls for a broader approach and examination of barriers which could inhibit this connection for individuals.


Barriers. This article discusses a fitness intervention for African American women and examines the outcomes.


Physical activity and happiness. The study demonstrates an increase in self-esteem, psychological well-being, and hopelessness in female college students after completing a 12 week regular exercise program.


Barriers. Explores the barriers to fitness perceived by rural youth.