

summer lovin':

SUMMER LOVIN': 5 HEALTHY REASONS TO GET OUTSIDE & PLAY

[Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM \(/bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drtcm\)](#)

August 28, 2014



By Dr. Melissa Carr

Get outside and play: For ages that's what parents have been saying to their kids. It's great advice for adults too, improving health through a number of parameters. Here are five reasons we should be taking our healthy activities outside during the [late summer months](http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/sweet-summertime-adapting-live-harmony-summer-season-grisma) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/sweet-summertime-adapting-live-harmony-summer-season-grisma>):

PRACTICE OUTSIDE

Though it may be routine to do all your yoga indoors, many cities offer outdoor yoga classes. Alternatively, you could follow a video on your mobile device or improvise on your own. If you're like me, you most enjoy watching those [online classes](http://www.gaiamtv.com/my-yoga/yoga?level=All&style=All&teacher=All&duration=All&speciality=All) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/my-yoga/yoga?level=All&style=All&teacher=All&duration=All&speciality=All>) with a gorgeous outdoor background, so why not find a place with your own beautiful backdrop?

GET YOUR VITAMIN D

If it's sunny out, remember to protect your skin. However, getting some time in the sun helps you build up your reserves of the "[sunshine vitamin," vitamin D](http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/vitamin-d-sunshine-vitamin-really-bright-idea) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/vitamin-d-sunshine-vitamin-really-bright-idea>). This important nutrient has been shown to help manage, treat and prevent various types of cancer, heart attacks and osteoporosis. As sunscreens with UVB blocks defend against both sunburns and vitamin D production, it is important to strike a balance between sunlight exposure and protection from sun damage, and as little as 10 to 15 minutes skin exposure to sun a few times a week will suffice.

IMPROVE YOUR MOOD

All this fresh air, sunlight, connection to nature, and exercise have an impressive ability to improve mood and treat depression. A 2013 study in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine reviewed 26 years of research to demonstrate that even just walking for 20-30 minutes per day can ward off depression. Another 2013 study, "Vitamin D deficiency and depression in adults: systematic review and meta-analysis," found a relationship between depression and low vitamin D levels. In addition, spending time in nature has the ability to [lower stress hormones](http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/9-hormone-need-knows-all-women) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/9-hormone-need-knows-all-women>) like cortisol, thus improving sleep, concentration, and energy and even reducing belly fat.

PAUSE FOR THE CAUSE

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has always recognized the importance of nature and seasonal changes. [Late summer is its own season in TCM](http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/chinese-medicine-tips-late-summer) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/chinese-medicine-tips-late-summer>) — a transition time between the active hot Yang energy of summer and the more inward cooling Yin energy of fall, like the instant when a pendulum reverses its swing. This is a season to digest and reflect on your yoga practice, your inspirations, your gratuities, your challenges, your choices, and your life. Late summer relates with the TCM element of earth, so connect with her and see how more centered you feel.

BECOME ONE WITH NATURE

A great way to acknowledge the seasonal transition is to practice your yoga or your meditation with nature. Practice tree pose next to a tree. Play with arm balancing poses on the soft, forgiving surface of a [sandy beach](http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/yoga-tips-summer-surfers) (<http://www.gaiamtv.com/article/yoga-tips-summer-surfers>). Discover your grit practicing on a big rock. Get into downward dog next to your dog on the grass. Seek out a rooftop to try pigeon pose. Or try the growing-in-popularity practice of SUP (stand up paddleboard) yoga.



([/bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drctcm](http://bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drctcm))

About the Author

Dr. Melissa Carr is a registered Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Vancouver, B.C. Melissa has always been active, despite knee ...

Read more from [Dr. Melissa Carr, B.Sc., Dr.TCM](http://bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drctcm) ([/bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drctcm](http://bio/dr-melissa-carr-bsc-drctcm))

BE THE FIRST ONE TO COMMENT

[LOGIN](#) ([/USER/LOGIN?DESTINATION=NODE%2F85831%23COMMENT-FORM](#)) OR [SIGN UP](#) ([/CART/ADD/BASIC?DESTINATION=CART/CHECKOUT](#)) TO ADD A COMMENT

NAVIGATION

[GaiamTV Home](#) [Most Popular](#) [Recently Added](#) [About Gaiam TV](#) [Write For Us](#) [Blog](#) [Devices](#) [Site Map](#)

CHANNELS

[My Yoga](#) [Health & Longevity](#) [Seeking Truth](#) [Spiritual Growth](#) [Films & Series](#) [Original Programs](#)

MEMBERSHIP

[Your Account](#) [Help/FAQ](#) [Community Guidelines](#) [Report a Problem](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Contact Us](#)

MORE FROM GAIAM

[About Gaiam](#) [Shop Gaiam Store](#) [Gaiam Yoga Studio](#) [Spiritual Cinema Circle](#)

Follow us