Trees can help improve your health

1) **Improving air quality**
2) **Providing opportunities for physical activity**
3) **Providing psychological benefits**

1) Improving air quality.

By absorbing pollutants, cleaning and releasing oxygen into the air we breathe.

Absorbing airborne pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone. These pollutants all affect the lungs and can exacerbate respiratory and heart diseases. Research has shown a clear correlation between asthma and the levels of nitrogen oxide (NO2) in air pollution caused by traffic near the home, which results in repeated hospital encounters[1].

Trees catch particle matter such as smoke, pollen and dust predominately from traffic emissions. Airborne pollution can contribute to the deaths of older people who can be more susceptible to the influence of air quality. Research shows that asthma rates among children aged four and five fell by a quarter for every additional 343 trees per square kilometre (one in every garden on an average street).[2]

Releasing oxygen through photosynthesis. Transpiring water (the evaporation of water into the atmosphere from the leaves and stems of plants), this creates a cooling affect.

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature"

The Diary of Ann Frank
12 June 1942 - 1 August 1944

"Nature is my medicine"

Sara Moss-Wolfe

2) Making us physically fitter and healthier

Woods are a great place to exercise which reduces heart disease, strokes and some cancers.

Woodland with public access can increase the opportunities for people to engage in physical activity. Increased exercise can reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease, stroke and some cancers.[3]

Evidence shows that by making the physical environment a nicer place to be and more accessible, people are more likely to exercise. For example research in the Netherlands and Japan indicated that people were more likely to walk or cycle to work if the streets were lined with trees.[4]

3) Making our minds happy and healthier

We get better faster, are less stressed and can help with long term disorders

Patient recovery rates improve when they can view trees from their hospital window. The evidence is so strong that the NHS is looking at developing an HS Forest to green their estate.[5]

Recent studies have looked at the beneficial effects of natural surroundings on children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.[6]

Trees and woodlands provide good setting for sociable recreational activities. This can complement community cohesion.

Studies have found that woods and trees can be an antidote to stress.[7]

References

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5 http://nhsforest.org/evidence

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7 The Forestry Commission, Health and Well-being, Trees, Woodlands and Natural Spaces, 2003