



How Autumn Walks Can Improve Your Mental Wellbeing

With a new national lockdown about to start, some people will find themselves with time on their hands, and nowhere to go. In such instances, try enjoying the glory of nature at this time of year, when the trees are shutting down before winter ...

While summer may strike you at the time to be outside, autumn - with its crisp leaves and warm, earthy colours - can also be a great time to get outdoors.

According to a recent study, a stroll through countryside decked out in autumn colours can lift people's mood as the nights draw in.

Analysis for the National Trust found that more than eight out of 10 (84%) people felt that bright autumn walks made them feel happier, healthier and calmer.

The boost people get from an autumn walk can help fend off the winter blues at a time when more than two-fifths (43%) admit to feeling down as the days shorten, the Trust said.

A poll of more than 1,000 people suggested about seven out of 10 (71%) found an autumn walk helped combat the winter blues, but almost half (48%) felt they did not go on enough walks in the autumn months.

Colour psychologist Angela Wright said: "Natural colour schemes can inspire us and lift our spirits. Autumn, combined with the rich light at this time of year, is a flamboyant blaze of intense colours with each affecting us in a different way.

"Fresh air, exercise and the sense of getting away from it all play a positive role in improving our well-being. However it's the colours that we experience which are the most powerful tonic to affecting our mood," she suggested.

The National Trust has drawn up some of the best spots to see the range of autumn colours from reds and oranges through to purple and deep greens.

Nant Gwynant in Snowdonia gives the walker a view of ancient oak and ash turning orange, they can enjoy the russet tones of the sedge in Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, while Divis Mountain in North Ireland's Belfast Hills is carpeted with the purple of devil's-bit scabious.

National Trust ranger for Ceredigion Gwen Potter said: "Autumn bursts with colour and life. It's the best time to see nature and wildlife at its most spectacular, but it's also a time of change and reflection.

"This season is the perfect time of year for walking. The trees and landscape start to turn every shade imaginable which lifts your spirits; it's cooler, but not cold, and you could get a misty morning with those familiar damp smells or a clear, crisp day when everything appears to shine brighter."

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