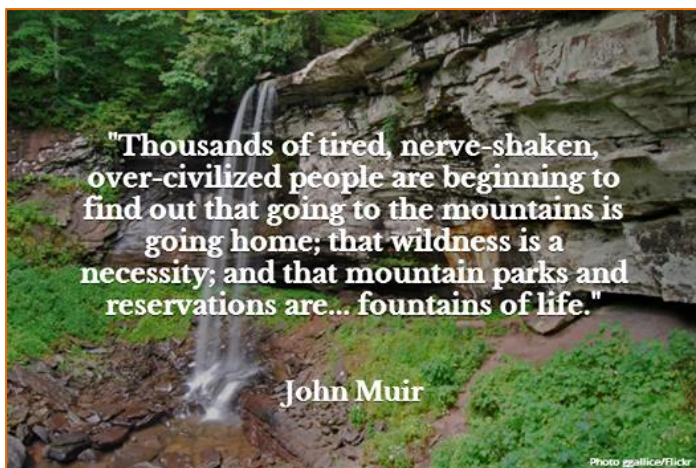




# Getting Outdoors: Take a Break from Screens

*Whether it's the bright sun, the melody of the birds, or the waves of wind rolling through tall grass, nature seems to be calling us to play. Nature has quite the competition for our attention with digital media.*

According to a new Nielsen report, American adults spend 11+ hours each day staring at, or listening to an electronic device (smartphone, TV, tablets, computers, etc.). All this time spent gazing into screens may have negative consequences. The blue light that helps the screens be seen in daylight, trick our brains into thinking it is daytime. This effect happens as we use our screens at night keeping us awake and preventing the production and release of sleep inducing hormone Melatonin. Besides keeping us awake our screens are also contributing to eye strain and damaged retinas. Electronic devices are so often utilized during sedentary activities that they can play a role in lowering life expectancy and increase odds of developing obesity, type II diabetes and heart disease. Time outdoors and away from the screens could be a way to relax and decompress. Relaxing does not always have to mean staying still. *Relaxing actively* has wonderful benefits and it is just plain fun.



## Outdoor Activities to Try:



## Benefits of Being Active Outdoors:

- Low-cost or free exercise.
- Decreases chance of chronic illness and increases life expectancy.
- Eases depression and relieves stress.
- Improves concentration.
- Improves quality of life and lets us absorb vitamin D from the sun naturally.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Strengthens community and reduces crime, while promoting volunteerism and stewardship.

Resource: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/health\\_benefits\\_081505.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/health_benefits_081505.pdf)

