

Natural cure of ecotherapy

IF YOU'RE struggling with stress, anxiety, or worry, get back to nature, advise British health experts.

The mental health charity, Mind, just released a report showing scientifically-backed findings on the mental health benefits of "ecotherapy" – programmes designed to promote well-being through outdoor activities in nature, such as walking groups or community gardening.

The organisation has funded 130 projects in England through an organisation called Ecominds, with a reported 69% of people experiencing improved mental health through the programme.

Mind also surveyed 100 people who took part in "green exercise activities", such as gardening, walking groups, or running, finding that 90% of respondents said that the combination of exercise and nature is "most important in determining how they feel".

A separate report released earlier this month from UK charity Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support found that as little as two-and-a-half hours of walking or gardening per week can save lives by lowering stress



levels and keeping us healthier and happier.

Scientific research also supports walking as good medicine: a recent study in the *British Medical Journal* found that brisk walking is just as good as taking medication for some health conditions, including heart diseases.

Also, a separate study published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* revealed that walking at least an hour a day could significantly cut a woman's risk of breast cancer.

– AFP-Relaxnews

4/16/2013