
NATURE BATHING MEDITATION



Image: Hidden Colors, Watercolor painted by Ashlee Li

Sponsored by the FAU Center for Environmental
Studies and the Counseling & Psychological Services

SHINRIN-YOKU

Taking in the forest through our senses

Goal

- To calm your mind by using the 5 senses to focus on your environment instead of your thoughts.

Benefits of forest bathing

- relieve stress
- avoid burnout
- boost immunity
- increase focus and memory
- improve heart and lung health
- control anger and addiction
- reduce anxiety and worry
- improve mood and energy levels
- overcome depression and sadness
- speed up recovery from illness and injury
- enhance emotional intelligence
- get better sleep
- find calm, creativity, clarity

Instructions

- As you walk through the arboretum, reflect on the questions in this booklet. You do not have to answer all the questions. Take time to extend an invitation to be present to yourself without judgment.

Helpful tips

- No cell phones; try not to talk during meditation action; be gentle with the environment (i.e. please don't pick flowers or leaves off of trees)

SOUND

Close your eyes. Listen to the sounds of the arboretum. Listen to the birds singing and the breeze rustling in the leaves of the trees.

- What can you identify hearing?
- How many bird sounds can you hear? Are there different patterns or cadences? Different pitches or volumes?
- Count how many different sounds you can hear.
- What are things you can hear and not see?
- Bring your awareness to the absence of sound (so just the space between any obvious sounds that you hear). Can you hear the stillness that holds all the sounds?
- Can you hear other nature sounds? Lizards running through the leaves? The crunch of leaves as you walk? Are the sounds different?
- What other sounds do you hear? Insects buzzing? The train? Cars? People talking? Your breath?
- Are sounds close or distant?



SIGHT

Observe the arboretum. Look at the different greens of the trees and leaves and creatures...

- How many different shades of green do you see?
- How many different shades of brown do you see on the trees? On the ground?
- See how many colors you can notice in your walk.
- Look at the sunlight filtering through the branches.
- What shapes and patterns can you notice?
- What shapes does the sunlight produce through the gazebo?
- What are things you can see but not hear?
- How many different textures can you see? Smooth? Flat? Rough? Prickly? Gritty? Wrinkly? Bumpy?
- If you look at something up close, is it different than farther away? What do you notice?
- Can you spot movement? Stillness?
- Can you see new plant growth? Death?
- Can you see any birds? Butterflies? Insects? Lizards?



SMELL

Take a deep breath... Smell the fragrance of the forest and breathe in the natural aromatherapy

- What smells can you identify?
- Do the smells change as you walk?
- Do the smells remind you of anything?
- Any memories associated with particular scents you smell in the arboretum?
- Are you smelling pleasant smells? Unpleasant smells? Sweet? Sour?
- How could you describe what you are smelling to someone that has never smelled it before?
- Can you smell the dining hall or food smells?
- Are there any smells from the road?
- Do any smells elicit any emotions or reactions from you?
- Do you notice the absence of any scent?



TASTE

- Can you taste the freshness of the air as you take deep breaths?
- Is there an absence of taste?
- Is there a flavor or aftertaste in your mouth currently?
- If you imagine taking a drink of water, what happens in your mouth?
- Is your mouth dry?
- Do you notice any different sensations or textures as you allow your tongue to roam around your mouth? Smooth? Bumpy?



TOUCH

- What do you notice about the temperature? Does it change as you walk through the arboretum? Is there a breeze? Sunlight?
- Touch different items of your choosing (i.e. dirt, leaves, palm fronds, etc.) What does the texture feel like?
- Is the object rough/ smooth/ hard/ soft/ sticky/ cold?
- Does the object feel different depending where you touch?
- What is the temperature of your object?
- What does it feel like to walk on the different surfaces of the arboretum? Do you notice any differences on pavement vs. the path?



REFLECTION:

- What parts of nature are bringing me calm?
- What have I noticed that I did not notice before?
- Where do feel most relaxed in my body?
- What are 2 prominent emotions I'm feeling in this moment?
- How challenging was this exercise? Why?
- What do I appreciate about the arboretum?
- What do I appreciate about myself?

