



Baltimore Woods
Nature Center
Nature in your hands

A Sensible Walk through the Woods

Reflect upon the last time you took a walk through the woods. What do you remember about it? Perhaps there was something that made it special?

There is a practice in Japan called *shinrin-yoku*, or “forest bathing.” This practice encourages people to go outside and explore a natural, wooded environment using their senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Anyone can forest bathe as long as one is quietly and thoughtfully partaking in the practice. There is no rush to the process. It is about being a part of the experience that matters.

Below are some tips to help you on your way to a sensible walk outside.

Sight: Try to take your time the next time you go on a walk through the woods. Look around the woods as if you were a child. Walk the woods in wonder of everything that is around you. I don’t deny that it feels sort of funny at first. However, a wonder based approach can help you to let go of preconceived notions when exploring. Looking at the world this way allows for a relaxed, yet stimulating, lens in which to see the world.

Touch: Go ahead and touch something in your immediate surroundings. By gently feeling one’s way through a natural environment, a feeling of being present can arise. Think about what you’re touching. Is it soft? Does it crunch beneath your fingers? Be mindful of your presence in nature. Avoid touching anything that may be at risk of being harmed or may be harmful to you.

Sound: Observation is not limited to what you can see or feel. Quietly immerse yourself in your surroundings. Turn off your phone to fully engage in the experience. Thoughts may pop into your mind. That is okay. Acknowledge your thoughts and let them move on at their own pace. Try to listen to the sounds nearest to you and then try to listen to the sounds farthest from you.

Taste and Smell: Forests are rich with aromatics. Trees, soil, water, and minerals interact to create a pleasurable experience for those willing to take a sniff. Try leaning in towards a tree. What does it smell like? Take deep breaths in and out while sitting or while standing. Practice inhaling and exhaling the fresh air, and the aromas, around you.

After you have tried forest bathing, record your experience below.

<i>Sights:</i>	<i>Sounds:</i>
<i>Touch:</i>	<i>Tastes and Smells:</i>

Want to explore more about forest bathing? Check out the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12CCjoixpkA>

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/blog/forest-bathing>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/lists/forest-bathing-nature-walk-health/>

<https://time.com/5259602/japanese-forest-bathing/>