



Get up and out!

The sun's shining, the birds are singing...Summer is the season to feel great! All you've got to do is get outside!

Everyone feels better when the sun comes out (bless us Brits. We don't see that much of it, do we?!). It's one of nature's best therapists. Sunlight triggers the body to make its own vitamin D, which plays a role in increasing the amount of oxygen in your blood. This in turn boosts your energy levels and sharpens your mental faculties. Clever eh?

But it's not only from the sun that we benefit when making the most of the good weather. A good walk offers all sorts of pluses, whether you're single, have a partner, or even a huge family! It's something everyone can do together with minimal of fuss and maximum pleasure. All you need is a pair of legs...

You'll start feeling good as soon as you're out of the car and moving. Walking releases the brain's natural 'happy' drugs – serotonin – so you (and whoever's with you) will automatically feel better for doing it.

A day out rambling with the kids gives you all a chance to relax together in the glorious outdoors. Everyone gets to spend 'family' time together and still have cosy one-to-ones. Perfect. It's also a lovely way to get to know friends better away from your usual environment. You know that they say; a change is good as a rest...

Country walks are also a good opportunity to rid yourself of anything that's been niggling you of late. Relate counselor Paula Hall explains that when walking you're having a side by side conversation, rather than a face to face one, so it can feel less confrontational and easier to talk about personal stuff.

"You're not forced to watch and react to the other person's response," she says. And you're potentially more relaxed because you can stay with the conversation, especially if you've started it three miles from the car!

"I always find that a walk in countryside or by the sea coupled with a meaningful chat with my family or good friends makes me feel so much better. I feel on top of things again," says mum of two, Sue Dove, 38.

So getting your walking boots on, and enjoy the Great British outdoors while the weather lasts!