

Science on the Slopes

Environmental Education & Wellness Program



Health & Wellness

Why Tree Hugging is Good for Your Mental Health



by Sandi Schwartz

Have you ever hugged a tree? Did you know it can help you feel happier and calmer? We know that spending time outdoors in nature reduces stress and boosts our mood. We also know that the act of hugging ourselves or another living thing can improve our physical and emotional well-being. So, why not try to combine these hugely beneficial activities into one? Plus, if we add a bit of mindfulness into the mix, we will be sure to feel even better.

HUGGING MEDITATION

In the late 1960's, legendary Zen Buddhist Teacher Thich Nhat Hanh developed a hugging meditation practice that entailed the core Zen principles of interconnectedness and inter-being. He found that hugging with mindfulness can bring reconciliation, healing, understanding, and happiness. More recently, Stone Kraushaar, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist known as The Hug Doctor and author of the book *4-21 Days to a Healthier You: 16 Days to a Healthier You, 16 Days to a Healthier You*

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