



**April 2020**

**Listen Up!**



We're back again! This time we'd like to point out some areas to focus on in order to stay **healthy** during the **stay at home** order.

- Because we are spending much of our time at home, we need to remember to still get some fresh air and enjoy the outdoors when we can.
- We also need to heed the needs of our bodies by eating healthy and exercising.
- At the end of the day, we all need to relax and rest-we'll share some calming music and sounds that can help.

[And don't forget to listen to our webinars, every Tuesday in April! You can find registrations links and recordings here.](#)



# Listen to Nature

## Your Vitamin D Levels Will Go Up

- Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin because sunlight hitting the skin begins the process that eventually leads to the creation of the vitamin.
- Epidemiologic studies are suggesting it may have protective effects against everything from osteoporosis to cancer to depression to heart attacks and stroke.
- You'll make all the vitamin D you need if you get outside and in the sun a few times a week and expose your arms and legs for 10 to 15 minutes.
- To keep skin healthy and also get Vitamin D:
  - Get some limited sun exposure on short walks and the like, supplemented with vitamin D pills if necessary.
  - Use sunscreen liberally when you are out for extended periods, particularly during the middle of the day.

## You'll Get More Exercise

- Indoor living is associated with being sedentary, while being outdoors is associated with activity.
- According to some surveys, American children spend an average of 6 hours a day with electronic media (video games, television, and so on), time that is spent mainly indoors and sitting down.
- Adults can go to the gym. But if you make getting outside a goal, that should mean less time in front of the television or computer and more time walking, biking, gardening, cleaning up the yard, and doing other things that put the body in motion.

## You'll Be Happier

- Light tends to elevate people's mood and there's usually more light available outside than in.
- Physical activity has been shown to relax and cheer people up, so if being outside replaces inactive pursuits with active ones, it might also mean more smiles and laughter.
- Researchers at the University of Essex in England are advancing the notion that exercising in the presence of nature has added benefit, particularly for mental health. Their investigations into "green exercise," as they are calling it, dovetails with research showing benefits from living in proximity to green, open spaces.
- Just five minutes of green exercise resulted in improvements in self-esteem and mood.

## Your Concentration May Improve

- Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his 2008 book *Last Child in the Woods*. It's a play on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Researchers have, in fact, reported that children with ADHD seem to focus better after being outdoors. A study published in 2008 found that children with ADHD scored higher on a test of concentration after a walk through a park than after a walk through a residential neighborhood or downtown area. Other ADHD studies have also suggested that outdoor exercise could have positive effects on the



condition.

- This research has been done in children, so it may not apply to adults, even those who have an ADHD diagnosis. But if you have trouble concentrating, some outdoor activity (the greener the better!) may help.

## You May Heal Faster

- In 2005, University of Pittsburgh researchers reported that spinal surgery patients experienced less pain and stress and took fewer pain medications during their recoveries if they were exposed to natural light.
- An older study showed that the view out the window (trees vs. a brick wall) had an effect on patient recovery.
- Of course, windows and views are different than actually being outside, but a little fresh air can help.

## Where Can I Go?

- On April 7th, Gov. Phil Murphy ordered [the closure of all state and county parks and forests](#) in New Jersey on because of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic.
- Municipal officials will decide whether or not their local parks will close or remain open, Murphy confirmed. While some federal parks, including the Delaware Water Gap and Gateway National Recreation Area, have closed facilities but remain open for passive recreation, others, like Morristown National Historical Park, are completely closed.
- You can check the status of U.S. National Parks in New Jersey [online](#).
- You can always take a walk around your neighborhood, go for a bike ride, or do some gardening. Just remember to follow social distancing rules!

## Become a Nature Expert!

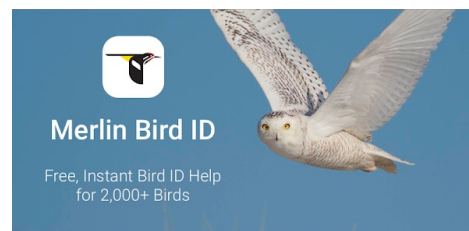
- Follow the guides below to start identifying trees and birds in your area!
- You can share this knowledge with others and even hold a contest on who can find the most unique species!



### Birds of NJ: Figure Out What's In Your Backyard - NJ Family

Ever glance outside at your birdfeeder and wonder what birds you're feeding? Here are the most common birds of NJ. courtesy of [istock.com/lightstalker](https://istock.com/lightstalker) If you hear a loud repetitive knocking noise (aka a drumming), check the trees in your backyard ...

[Read more](#)  
[www.njfamily.com](http://www.njfamily.com)



### Merlin Bird ID by Cornell Lab of Ornithology - Apps on...

What's that bird? Answer 5 questions or upload a photo and Merlin Bird ID will help you solve the mystery. Merlin is more than just a field assistant to help you identify birds, Merlin is a customizable field guide for birds around the world.

[Read more](#)  
[play.google.com](https://play.google.com)



## What Tree Is That?

Our illustrated, step-by-step process makes it easy to identify a tree simply by the kinds of leaves it produces. Begin identifying your tree by choosing the appropriate region below. Great for: Additional Resource Tree City USA Bulletin: What...

[Read more](#)  
[www.arboday.org](http://www.arboday.org)



SOURCE: [https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter\\_article/a-prescription-for-better-health-go-alfresco](https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/a-prescription-for-better-health-go-alfresco)

<https://www.nj.com/coronavirus/2020/04/is-my-local-park-closed-a-full-list-of-parks-gov-murphy-just-closed-in-response-to-coronavirus.html>



# Listen to Your Body

## Eat Well

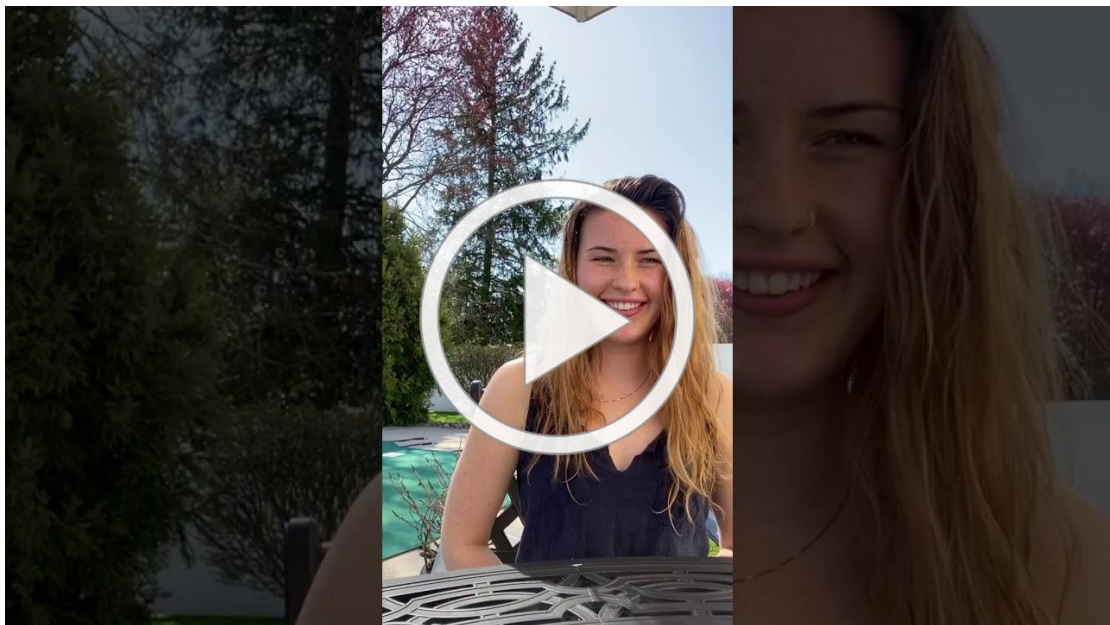
- Check out our playlist of healthy snacking videos below.
- They include ideas and recipes to keep you well fed and feeling good without breaking the budget.
- For more [snack ideas, click here.](#)





## Yoga and Meditation

- Follow along with our yoga and meditation guides to keep in shape!
- Try moving your exercise routine outdoors to bask in the calming sounds of nature and catch some sun.
- [Click here for more information about yoga and its benefits.](#)



## Dance Your Stress Away!

- Health benefits of dancing include:
  - improved condition of your heart and lungs
  - increased muscular strength, endurance and motor fitness
  - weight management
  - better coordination, agility and flexibility
  - improved balance and spatial awareness
  - greater self-confidence and self-esteem
- Have your own dance party with some [NJSAP curated tunes below](#) or [register for](#)



## Keep Exercising at Home!

- We can't go to the gym, [but there are many recordings and live streams you can watch to keep exercising at home.](#)
- Check out the video below from the Mayo Clinic on how and why we should exercise at home.



- The video below from [IvanaExercise](#) was designed for people with I/DD and people with limited mobility.
- It features exercises that improve flexibility, strength, and cardiorespiratory



endurance.



SOURCE: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/dance-health-benefits>



## Listen to Calming Sounds

### ASMR

- ASMR stands for autonomous sensory meridian response, and is still a relatively new creation.
- It describes a feeling of euphoric tingling and relaxation that can come over someone when they watch certain videos or hears certain sounds.
- It might surprise you, but many ASMR videos feature people doing incredibly simple, quiet, calming tasks, such as folding towels, brushing their hair, or flipping magazine pages.
- You might hear someone's voice speaking in the background of the video, but not always. The audio clips often consist of voices whispering nice things (like "You are appreciated"), or contain the sound of tapping, scratching, or rain.
- If this is something that interests you, [try listening to some ASMR videos.](#)

### White Noise and Sleep

- Getting a good night's sleep often becomes tougher to achieve as you grow older. According to the U.S. National Institutes of Health, older adults who don't sleep

well at night are more likely to have problems with memory and attention and are at a greater risk of nighttime falls.

- If you have trouble falling asleep or are easily awakened during the night, many sleep specialists recommend trying a sound conditioner or white noise machine.
- The devices work in two ways: by blocking distracting noises and producing soothing sounds that are relaxing and help to induce sleep.
- White noise is when sound waves of a broad spectrum of frequencies are combined, forming a sound similar to the constant hum a fan creates when it's blowing air. White noise machines may generate their own white noise or play it back in a loop. [Test it out here.](#)
- You can also try a machine that makes calming nature sounds.

## Calming Music

- Listen to calming music during yoga, mediation, or just when you're feeling stressed.
- [There are many free playlists you can find online.](#)
- Benefits of calming music include:
  - Reducing stress
  - Improving concentration
  - Reducing perception of pain
  - Improving sleep
  - Improving brain function
  - Lowering blood pressure and heart rate
  - Helps you study better

SOURCE: <https://www.sleep.org/articles/what-is-asmr/>  
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/white-noise-and-sound-sleep-2224280>  
<https://exploringyourmind.com/10-benefits-relaxing-music/>

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# Let's Stay Healthy and Listen to Each Other!

We need your help to keep this important information flowing!  
Please make a donation to NJSAP now so we can keep you informed in the future.

<https://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/donations.html>

*currently  
listening*



This is one of many emails that The Arc of New Jersey is distributing in an effort to help individuals with I/DD, their families, and staff to be safe and healthy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To see other emails that The Arc of New Jersey has distributed on this topic, please go to <https://www.arcnj.org/information/covid-19-updates-information.html>

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Looking to learn more about healthy living?  
We can hold a Healthy Lifestyles Workshop at your location! **\*In person trainings are not currently available but will resume in the future.**



Don't see what you're looking for? We'll make it for you!  
E-mail [NJSAP@ArcNJ.org](mailto:NJSAP@ArcNJ.org) or call 732-749-8514 to schedule a training at your location!

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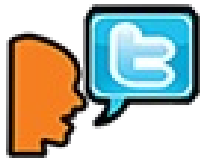


*The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey*

The [Healthy Lifestyles Project \(HLP\)](#) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#).

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# New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People  
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities