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# RELAX *Revolution*

Ever feel like your fast-paced, hyper-connected habits are shaving years off your life—and adding wrinkles to your face? Spoiler: They are. High stress levels can lower your immune response and speed the aging process. And while massages and manis are plenty pampering, there's a brave new world of wellness treatments out there to explore, from sound healing to float tanks, that take relaxation to the next level. When you're less frazzled, you won't just feel better—you'll look a hell of a lot better too

BY KAYLEIGH DONAHUE HODES



## Forest Bathing

It may sound like the touchy-feely way of saying “take a hike,” but forest bathing—typically a meditative nature walk during which you focus your senses on the outdoors rather than on your own thoughts—has solid health benefits. Studies done in Japan, where the trend is known as *shinrin-yoku*, show that the treatment can reduce levels of cortisol, our stress hormone.

**IN THE FOREST** This ritual is more involved than lacing up your shoes and looking up. True forest bathing—an activity now offered at select spas in the U.S.—normally includes a guided walk to ensure you're in tune with the environment (and not trying to document it all on Snapchat). Our tester signed up for the Mindfulness in Motion walk led by Nina Smiley, Ph.D., director of marketing and mindfulness at the bucolic Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, N.Y. (free for guests, from \$310 per night; [mohonk.com](http://mohonk.com)). After a quiet 20-minute stroll on the 1,200-acre property, Smiley instructed our reporter to close her eyes and call out some senses: What did she smell? What did she hear? A few minutes later, Smiley told her to open her eyes. “I suddenly felt as though I'd spent the first half of my day living in black

and white, and now I saw the world in rich color,” says our tester. That perceptiveness lasted into her return to the big city, where simply observing the Manhattan skyline brought her a little more joy and peace.

**IN YOUR HOME** Hit the reset button by sitting in a room with a view and burning nature-scented incense. Slow your thoughts, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and focus on what you smell and hear (play free nature sounds on [meditationroom.org](http://meditationroom.org)). Look out the window after 15 minutes. You'll be surprised by how much sharper the world appears through fresh eyes and a rested mind.

Juniper Ridge Cedar Campfire Incense, \$12; [juniperidge.com](http://juniperidge.com).

