

The Science Behind Why Camping Makes You Happy

- By Jessica Sanders



Ever come back from a trip thinking 'I need a vacation from my vacation?' The hustle and bustle of traveling can leave you feeling exhausted and frazzled, not rejuvenated.

Studies suggest that camping is one exception. Pitching a tent or parking the RV in the woods, by a lake or seaside can have a relaxing effect and leave you feeling more refreshed than before you left commuting, work and other responsibilities behind.

"The studies we have looked at suggest that something more transformational happens when we camp. Camping allows us to get away from the routines and the relative comforts and things we depend upon in our daily lives," according to the authors of [The Psychological and Social Benefits of the Camping Experience](#) (referenced as *TPSBCE*).

There are many reasons why campers are happy people. For one, camping forces us detach from our smartphones, the Internet and TVs and connect with nature instead. Here's how—and why—camping can positively impact your life.

Improved Quality of Life

Some 79 percent of campers are satisfied with their quality of life as opposed to non-campers, 59 percent of whom report general life satisfaction. The authors of *TPSBCE* also found that campers experience an uptick in overall wellbeing.

Those who vacation in the wilderness reported feeling more optimistic, happy and energized on a regular basis. "These people seem to have a greater life balance than those who don't currently 'escape' into nature for any length of time," according to *TPSBCE*.

Peace, Love and Adventure

If you feel a certain "zen" while camping, you're not alone. The words peace, escape, fun, happiness and adventure were found to be closely associated with camping according to the [2012 American](#)

[Camper Report](#). Similar to yoga or meditation, camping translates to a noticeably relaxed state of mind that lends itself naturally to happiness.

More Lifelong Memories

Stories around the campfire and long hikes are cornerstones of camping, and 97 percent of people polled for *TPSBCE* say memories from these special moments make them feel emotionally closer to the people they camp with. This not only makes campers happy; it also makes the experience that much more meaningful.

Better Family Cohesiveness

You know the scene well. You pull into a campsite and someone starts delegating: "You start unpacking, you set up the tent, and I'll grab the wood."

These tasks differ from the mundane chores of everyday life and give everyone a chance to show what they can do outside of the house.

"Families find that they take on different roles and realize that their partner or kids have skills that maybe they didn't even know they had," according to *TPSBCE*.

In the report, children also noted that their parents were more fun and less likely to shout or get mad. With a lack of stress and abundance of sunshine and fresh air, everyone can unwind, even hyperactive children.

The American Journal of Public Health [found](#) that these children were relaxed within minutes of being in a green space. Happy parents and happy kids equates to a happier family.

Better Health at All Ages

What's the secret to feeling younger? According to *TPSBCE* it's camping; 83 percent of people 75 years of age and older said they feel especially active for their age, while only 66 percent of non-campers felt the same way.

Not to mention, 73 percent of campers ages 26 to 40 feel healthier for their age compared with 49 percent of non-campers. [Being active makes you happy](#) and [exercise helps relieve stress](#), so it only makes sense that active campers, both young and old, are happier.

You Can Be Yourself

In a world where everyone is trying to be someone else, which can be a significant aspect of unhappiness, camping seems to provide a respite from that stress. In fact, 80 percent of campers agreed that camping allows you to be yourself, while 75 percent of campers agreed that camping is a great people leveler—everyone chops wood, cooks dinner, and cleans camp with little to no hierarchy involved.

"When we consider that our findings showed that spending time with friends and family was what made people happy in their lives, then it seems as though camping really can play an important role in bringing people together in a more socially inclusive and community spirited way," according to *TPSBCE*.