

March: Benefits of Travel

Travel does not appeal to everyone. Perhaps the thought of planning a vacation stresses you out, a vacation is not financially feasible right now, or your current life circumstances make traveling impossible. However, for those of you who are open to travel and are contemplating whether it's worth putting your hard-earned money towards a vacation, these benefits might convince you to start saving for your next trip.

- **Improved physical health.** Traveling to different environments can create stronger antibodies and boost your immune system. Studies have shown that regular vacations are associated with greater longevity and reduced risk of heart disease.
- **Improved cognitive health.** Engaging with foreign cultures can increase cognitive flexibility, creativity, personal growth, and the ability to make deep connections between seemingly unrelated concepts.
- **Improved emotional health.** In general, traveling has been shown to reduce stress and improve mood, and this effect can linger for weeks after the trip has ended. Travel takes you out of your daily routine and into new surroundings, which can reset your body and mind. Planning a trip, even one not actually taken, has been shown to increase happiness.
- **Increased physical activity.** Travel often translates into increased opportunities to be physically active as you explore new locations.
- **Better sleep.** Because travel is often associated with increased physical activity and reduced stress, many people find improved sleep quality when on vacation, and this benefit can carry over when you return home.
- **Increased cultural awareness.** Meeting new people and experiencing different cultures opens your mind to the variety of the human experience.

If you don't want to travel or if travel is not an available option right now, engaging in new activities can achieve similar benefits. Meeting people of different cultures, engaging in more outdoor physical activity, "unplugging" while on a staycation, visiting nearby places you haven't been to yet, giving back to your community, and meditating could bestow similar mental, emotional, and physical benefits.