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The effect of virtual nature visits and nearby nature visits on recovery from work in remote and hybrid work: A partly randomised cross-over trial

This study examines the effects of virtual nature visits and nearby nature visits after work on employees' psychological and physiological recovery from work. The virtual nature visits involved watching nature videos using Virtual Reality headsets, while during nearby nature visits, the participants were asked to visit a place of nature near their workplace or home. The participants (N=57) were engaged in hybrid or remote work. The study was conducted over alternating three-week intervention periods. All participants first took part in a control week. In the second week, they were randomly assigned to either a nearby nature visit or a virtual nature visit, with the type of visit being switched during the third week. Participants reported higher levels of mastery experiences during virtual and nearby nature weeks than during the control week. Virtual nature visits also benefited the physiological recovery of the participants who had a lower need for recovery. The results highlighted a small group of participants over 43 years of age who had a higher need for recovery. They reported an increase in daily occupational well-being during the week with the nearby nature visits. This study integrates health and well-being research traditions with sustainable tourism research. It generates new information about the well-being effects of different nature experiences at the boundary of work and leisure time.

Keywords: nearby nature, Virtual Reality, remote work, occupational well-being, intervention study