



A WALK IN THE WOODS:

*Experience
the Benefits of
FOREST BATHING
This New
Year's Day!*



INSIDE:

- ✓ Rockin' That Turkey Trot!
- ✓ Patient Success Story

*Can we help you
with your pain?*

Give us a call at
616-537-2864 to book
your appointment today!

A WALK IN THE WOODS:

The Benefits of Forest Bathing

Every January, state parks across the country encourage people to celebrate New Year's Day with a hike in their local park — and this year, Full Potential PT is joining in on the fun! Not only is hiking great exercise, but studies show that spending time in forested or wild areas can promote relaxation and improved mental health.

In fact, **A First Day Hike** (as the initiative is known) this January 1st is a great opportunity to explore forest bathing, a wellness practice that first emerged in Japan in the 1980s. The concept is simple: go into a wooded area and experience it with all five senses. Allow yourself to simply open up to your surroundings, taking in the sights, sounds, scents, sensations, and even tastes of the wilderness.

Sound implausible? The practice is backed by science. One literature review found that forest bathing can reduce blood pressure, pulse rate, and anxiety levels — thus improving the quality of life for hypertensive patients. Another study showed similar effects on people with depression and depressive tendencies.

At Full Potential PT, we care about your entire well-being, so we're encouraging our patients to consider a First Day Hike this year. Keep reading for more tips about making the most of your New Year's walk in the woods!

HIKING AND FOREST BATHING: A NATURAL PAIRING

All those benefits of forest bathing don't necessarily stem from exercise. Rather, they seem to come from simply being in nature, allowing yourself to slow down and unplug from the stresses of everyday life. So, even if you don't go on a grueling, day-long hike, you still get health benefits.

That said, even a short hike (or walk in the woods) offers plenty of physical benefits. Hiking has a bit of a reputation for being an intense outdoor sport, but the truth is that you can make hiking as strenuous or leisurely as you'd like. A thirty-minute trek down a meandering forest path will still get your heart pumping, improve your balance, and build strength.

That's why we encourage you to try both this New Year's Day.

(Continued Inside)

TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FIRST DAY FOREST BATHING HIKE

- **Visit Full Potential Physical Therapy for a pre-hike checkup.** Our physical therapist can give you personalized tips to ensure you stay injury-free and have a great experience on your First Day Hike.
- **Pick the perfect location.** You have several opportunities for hikes or forested walks in the Holland area. Saugatuck State Park and Sanctuary Woods are a great place to soak in some good vibes, Hemlock Crossing north of town offers some great hiking, and even the Van Raalte estate has walking trails which are close to town. Choose one that appeals to you and is a good match for your physical abilities. Visit the park's website to learn more about the trails they have available, or ask our therapists for guidance.
- **Dress for the weather.** Yes, it's cold and snowy this time of year. Make sure to bundle up, wear appropriate footwear, and bring a hot beverage (a Thermos of green tea is a classic forest bathing drink).
- **Ditch your phone.** Forest bathing aims to pay attention to the surrounding woods, so you don't want your phone to be a distraction. If you don't feel comfortable leaving it in the car, turn it off completely and toss it in the bottom of your bag.
- **Engage your five senses.** This is one of the crucial components of forest bathing. You don't want to just walk down the hiking trail; you want to fully immerse yourself in the landscape:
 - » **See** the bare branches, clumps of snow and ice, and old leaves.
 - » **Listen** for winter birdsong, falling ice, and other mid-winter sounds.
 - » **Smell** the sweetness of tree sap and the metallic scent of cold weather.
 - » **Touch** the frozen soil and rough tree bark. You can take your gloves off for a few moments!
 - » **Taste** the treats you brought with you. Remember that Thermos of tea we suggested you bring? Take a few minutes to sip it and relish its earthy flavor!



A SIMPLE PATH TO IMPROVED WELLNESS

It's an old belief that what you do on New Year's Day sets the tone for the rest of the year. A First Day Forest Bathing Hike on January 1st will help get you in the right mindset for an active, healthy 2024 while giving you a taste of the benefits of forest bathing.

To learn more about how Full Potential Physical Therapy can help you make the most of your hike – or any new physical endeavors – call us for an appointment today.

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6589172/>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7310560/>; <https://www.stateparks.org/special-programs/first-day-hikes/>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC699309>



Want to learn more? Visit us online at FullPotentialPT.com or call us at 616-537-2864.

HELP US BUILD A BAG OF HOPE!



Last month we collected donations for Community Action House. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to donate 65 pounds of food for our neighbors! Way to go!

THIS MONTH WE'RE COLLECTING DONATIONS FOR A NEW CAUSE – HOPE PKGS!

Hope Pkgs provides first-night bags for kids entering the foster system. It not only gives them necessary items like supplies and clothes, but also gives them something of their own to have in a time of big changes. Having a cozy pair of pajamas, a fluffy stuffed animal, or a soft blanket can make a scary night feel that much more safe.

To build a bag, simply fill a backpack with the items listed by age range. Packing a bag can be a fun activity for kids, teens, and adults! We are also accepting donations of individual supplies to be used for future bags. We're hosting

our backpack drive throughout the month of December – stop by and drop off supplies any time during clinic hours!

BUILD-A-BAG
FOR
HOPE PKGS

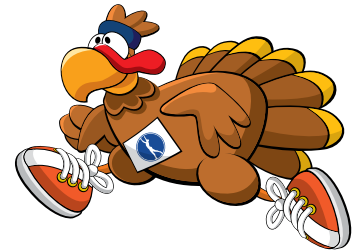
★ BABIES ★	KIDS	12 & UP
SIZES NEWBORN TO 3T	SIZES 4T TO KIDS 10	SIZES KIDS 12 TO ADULT XL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PJs or sleepers• Socks• Blanket• Bottle—for sizes 12 mths and smaller• Baby wash• Baby wipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pajamas• Socks• Underwear• Stuffed Animal• Kids toothbrush• Kids toothpaste• Tear-Free body wash	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pajamas• Socks• Underwear• Blanket/Throws• Deodorant• Bodywash• Toothbrush/paste

WE KINDLY REQUEST ALL ITEMS TO BE NEW

HOPE PKGS IS IN SPECIAL NEED OF BABY WIPES, SIZE 3 DIAPERS, GALLON ZIPLOCK BAGS, AND TEEN BACKPACKS

WE ROCKED THAT TURKEY TROT!

Three of our providers ran in the Zeeland Turkey Trot this Thanksgiving: Dr. Alisha, Dr. Jeremy, and our PTA, Jodi. Jodi placed first in her division (three cheers for Jodi!) and Dr. Jeremy placed sixth in his (woohoo for Dr. Jeremy too!). We're proud of all three of them for braving the cold holiday morning and rockin' that turkey trot!



Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!
Book online at FullPotentialPT.com

“If you don’t make the time to work on creating the life you want, you’re eventually going to be forced to spend a lot of time dealing with a life you don’t want.” — Kevin Ngo

It is not unusual for me to peruse through websites with famous quotes of people who lived large in history. I find them interesting as they often inspire me to dig deeper in how this applies to my life. I like the succinctness of a quote and how meaning is communicated in as few words as possible. What I often notice is the most impactful quotes seem to have the least words which somehow inspires more self-reflection and awareness. Some quotes can hit like a cold dip in the lake and wake us up to new possibilities.

Such was the effect of the quote above, especially the last sentence. After nearly 40 years of meeting people – which equates to about 8,000 new patients – some patterns are observed with their situations. I would surmise there are a fair number of people who are “spending a lot of time dealing with a life [they] don't want” and wondering how they got into that situation. They very well may have been following the best advice at the time, but even so, have arrived at an impasse in progress. A common theme is to be stuck with a body that is not able to perform as desired and now the question is what to do or where to go. It can become a lifestyle of “dealing’ with body problems. I hear it over and over – how getting old is not for sissies. I have even seen tee-shirts proclaiming that idea and it has some truth.

This is not a quote to help inspire only the youth of our society, although if they took notice early they would be far ahead of the curve once they reach my age. It is a quote for all ages. Why is this just as true for the above-50 crowd as for those below? Look no further than the first line of this quote to find the answer.

In fact, I would like this quote more if the beginning of the sentence was the conclusion. “You’re eventually going to be forced to spend a lot of time dealing with a life you don’t want if you don’t make the time to work on creating the life you do want.” Making the time to create the life you want, or creating in general, is an ageless concept and it is our answer to dealing with an unwanted body problem. Those of us over 50 have the advantage of motivation; we feel in our body those things we do not want to become permanent.

One has to have a good “why” in what they are doing to feel inspired and continue if the going gets bumpy. The wise person can see the “why” in something more astutely and so take action in the correct direction. A body not working optimally for your expectations or lifestyle forces you to cope and seek answers. The more that answer truly handles your body problem, the more that problem does not interrupt your life in the future or have a chance to build momentum to take over your life. This is such a key concept with body problems as we have many choices in addressing pain and limitation.

A fairly stable truth about our bodies, when it comes to solving a muscle and joint problem, is that...

...if you are not involved in the answer, then you are becoming dependent on something whose effect will eventually plateau. Your active involvement is key.

Medication may help, massage may help or adjustments or rest – all may have a role to play but the most key role needed is your active involvement in your care – it is your relationship with your body.

Full Potential PT is 100% about involving you in your care so you learn how to handle your body over time and avoid getting trapped in dealing with a life you do not want. It starts with being inspired (maybe from reading this article) and feeling motivated to create a new routine that will promote a life you want more of. Yes, it will take some commitment but it starts with a decision, one that with the New Year on our doorstep is a great time to make, no matter how old you are. Call our office and find out how we can help you. 2024 wants you to be more a part of making this year noteworthy.

To the start of a new you,

Vincent Hauueken, PT

**Nagging pain that won't go away? Call us at 616-537-2864 to book your appointment today!
Book online at FullPotentialPT.com**

PATIENT *Success* STORY



“As a result of physical therapy, I have less knee pain — pretty much gone. I am able to sit up, get up from lying down, and sit to stand (10 in a row!). I have better strength in my legs. I came in with severe pain — gone!!!

Dr. Jeremy helped explain all exercises thoroughly. Always on time. Nice clean facilities. Front office girls efficient and friendly. Best physical therapy place I have ever been — here and Chicago!”

— *Jeanne K.*



You can help someone else find THEIR Success Story — AND win a Meijer gift card!

PLAY THE REFERRAL GAME

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At Full Potential, we know that a referral from our patients is the biggest compliment.

Let us thank you with these 3 simple steps!

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2. Give this coupon to family and friends!
3. Be sure they bring this coupon to their first appointment.

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Your Name

Our New Patient's Name!

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