



Green and blue urban environments for heart health

Everyone in Australia should be able to access and meaningfully connect with nature as part of everyday life. Green and blue spaces provide opportunities for play, rest, socialising and being physically active.

Green (vegetation) and **blue** (water) spaces can help improve heart health through:



improved levels of physical activity



lowering anxiety and depression



mitigating extreme weather events



improved social interaction and connectivity



improving sleep quality



filtering air pollution particles



mental and emotional benefits



improving diet



inspiring care and concern for environmental outcomes.



lowering levels of stress, heart rate and blood pressure



reducing exposure to air and noise pollution



mitigating the effects of urban heat islands

Areas of higher density and less advantage often provide fewer opportunities for nature exposure.¹

To achieve equity and access for all, the 3-30-300 rule should be applied in all urban environments.²

The 3-30-300 rule:



any person can see **three** trees from their home



the tree canopy of any area is at least **30%**



everyone lives within **300** metres of public open space

Source: Konijnendijk Jimenez MP, DeVile NV, Elliott EG, et al. Associations between Nature Exposure and Health: A Review of the Evidence. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. Apr 30 2021;18(9):doi:10.3390/ijerph1809479

Walkable neighbourhoods need to provide residents with quality green and blue spaces, tree canopy and shade.

Green and blue urban infrastructure can include:

- Community gardens
- Seating
- Paths and trails
- Pocket parks
- Outdoor gyms
- Vertical green walls

References

¹ Chandrabose M, Gunn, L., Astell-Burt, T., Badland, H., Carver, A., Christian, H., Cleland, V., Edwards, N., Feng, X., Loh, V., Owen, N., Rachele, J., Sugiyama, T., Timperio, A., Veitch, J. 2026, Walkability and the built environment. Report prepared for the National Heart Foundation of Australia

² Konijnendijk CC. Evidence-based guidelines for greener, healthier, more resilient neighbourhoods: Introducing the 3-30-300 rule. *J For Res (Harbin)*. 2023;34(3):821-830. doi:10.1007/s11676-022-01523-z

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