



**Welcome to Forest Bathing with
Confluence Healing Arts
Kortnee “Whitehawk” McDowell, MS,Ed
“Get grounded, centered, balanced and focused”**

Thank you for joining us in Forest Bathing:

Please confirm the date, time and location of your program.

Specific instructions:

Please eat before you arrive! Bring bottled water!

When you should arrive:

We will start promptly. Please arrive 15 minutes early to allow enough time to find parking and to check in for your program. If you are running late or if you are unable to attend, please email Kortnee@ConfluenceHealingArts.org

Restrooms:

Check the location for your program and make yourself aware of the restroom facilities available so you can plan accordingly. Torrey Park DOES NOT HAVE restroom facilities. Cypress Bend and Landa Park both have public restrooms.

Where to meet:

Check the location for your program and meet at the following location 15 minutes prior to your start time.

Torrey Park: We will meet at the parking lot.

Cypress Bend Park: We will meet near the playground.

Landa Park: We will meet at the Panther Canyon trailhead.

How far will we walk: Distance covered will total approximately a half mile or less.

What to wear for Forest Bathing:

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Long pants and/or long socks: We will be sitting on the ground and possibly standing in tall grass.
Pants and socks can help protect you from any new “friends” that you do not wish to get to know.
(aka: Fire ants, ticks, spiders and other famous Texas-pals such as spiny cactus and stinging nettle)
- Light jacket, hat, sunglasses
- You may carry a small pack if you wish

What to bring:

- Water bottle (Please stay hydrated.)
- Face covering or mask to protect yourself from covid-19.
- Small towel or sit-upon (We will be sitting on the ground.)
- Sunscreen (Our walk is mostly shady, but please protect your skin.)
- Insect repellent (Please choose an all-natural formula and avoid anything with a strong scent.)

What NOT to bring:

- Binoculars, spotting scopes, bird books, and naturalists guidebooks. Forest bathing is not a nature/naturalist walk.
- Journals: Leave it in your car so you can jot down your new insights afterwards; Stay engaged during the process.
- Cameras: Make a photo in your mind’s eye instead so you can let yourself completely relax into the experience.
- Phones: Need we explain? Give yourself a well-earned break!
- Wristwatch: Let yourself be free for a few hours. We will watch the clock for you and promise to be done on time!
- Dogs: No matter how well-behaved your Fur-Baby may be, they simply aren’t invited.
- (Service animal can be accommodated with advance notice.)
- Children under 18: We offer programs with activities designed specifically for kiddos. Please choose the correct time slot.
- Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipes, E-Cigs, Vape

What to expect:

- A non-vigorous, guided wander through the trees full of inviting new ways to open your senses and your mind.
- A series of invitations and activities to support you in experiencing nature in a totally unique way.
- Forest bathing is not a hike or a way to get exercise: we will be moving quite slowly and quietly and not traveling very far.

Your safety & well-being:

- Your guide, Kortnee McDowell, is Wilderness First Aid Certified and will be carrying a First Aid Kit.
- If you carry an epi-pen, other fast acting medication or have any medical condition (i.e. allergies, seizures, heart condition) you must let your guide know BEFORE we begin.
- All participants are required to sign a liability waiver and photo release upon arrival.

What is Forest Therapy & Why should I do it?

Forest Therapy combines leisurely walks and inviting experiences on gentle paths under forest canopy with guided activities to help you open your senses, hone your intuition, and relate with nature as you never have before. We draw upon mindfulness meditation practices, and techniques of deep nature connection mentoring. We also use the Way of Council for group dialogue at several points along the way to help participants learn and teach other as we discuss what we are experiencing together.

The following is copied from <http://www.shinrin-yoku.org/shinrin-yoku.html>

Shinrin-yoku means "taking in the forest atmosphere" or "forest bathing." It was developed in Japan and has become a cornerstone of preventive health care and healing in Japanese medicine. Researchers in Japan and South Korea have established a robust body of scientific literature on the health benefits of spending time in the living forest.

The idea is simple: if a person simply visits a natural area and walks in a relaxed way there are calming, rejuvenating and restorative benefits to be achieved.

We have always known this intuitively. But in the past several decades there have been many scientific studies that are demonstrating the mechanisms behind the healing effects of simply being in wild and natural areas. For example, many trees give off organic compounds that support our natural killer cells that are part of our immune system's way of fighting cancer.

The scientifically-proven benefits of Shinrin-yoku include:

- Boosted immune system functioning, increase in the count of the body's Natural Killer (NK) cells
- Reduced blood pressure
- Reduced stress
- Improved mood
- Increased ability to focus, even in children with ADHD
- Accelerated recovery from surgery or illness
- Increased energy level
- Improved sleep

Just as impressive are the results that we are experiencing as we make this part of our regular practice:

- Deeper and clearer intuition
- Increased flow of energy
- Increased capacity to communicate with the land and its species
- Increased flow of eros/life force
- Deepening of friendships
- Overall increase in sense of happiness

This practice has had roots roots in many cultures throughout history. John Muir wrote, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home. Wilderness is a necessity."

**“I want to think again of dangerous and noble things.
I want to be light and frolicsome.
I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,
as though I had wings.”
-Mary Oliver**

The science and health benefits of Forest Bathing: <https://www.natureandforesttherapy.org/about/science>

The Forest is the Therapist; The Guide Opens the Door