

## Remember Recess? Why Playing Outside at Work Pays

Science tells us a 15-minute scamper around the schoolyard helps children stay focused, improves memory and supports overall physical and mental health. The benefits of recess don't end once we leave school. Providing employees space to [get outside](#) during the workday [can pay dividends](#). Nature has calming and energizing effects. It can improve employee health and well-being and increase presenteeism and attract talent. [Active Design](#) provides guidelines on how to physically engage people within a built environment designed around nature. Here are five key design strategies for creating active outdoor spaces that will keep employees happier and healthier.

### **Provide Refuge**

Provide staff safe, quiet spaces to sit, stretch, meditate or meet on green roofs, patios and [park-like spaces](#). Consider sheltered paths lined with trees and shrubs to encourage getting outside even in winter. Plant areas outside office windows. Just looking at nature can improve mood and increase productivity.

### **Create Connections**

Design trails that meander through naturalized spaces or [no-mow zones](#). If your property connects to others, invite neighbours to do the same to create a larger network of natural space.

### **Add a Challenge**

Include outdoor pull-up bars and push-up benches. Encourage taking the stairs and biking to work. Offer incentives to reward staff for participation. Mark trails to show how many steps or kilometers were walked.

### **Make it Equitable**

Create accessible spaces for all staff to use and enjoy. Invite Greening Corporate Grounds to conduct a design charrette to engage staff in designing your site to meet their needs.

### **Build to Size**

There are opportunities to add natural assets and create active design spaces on any site. Whether it's adding a few planters with pollinator plants, setting up badminton nets or creating a cross-country ski loop, any change you make will provide benefits to your staff.

We can help you activate your property to promote human and environmental well-being. Contact us at [gcg@cvc.ca](mailto:gcg@cvc.ca) to learn more.