

Sensory Hike • 1

Are you ready?

Are your shoes tied? Are you ready to let your senses lead the way? Take a second. Notice: Are you feeling excited, calm, neutral?

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Make a mental picture.

Take a snapshot of where you are, and envision the path you'll hike. Where does it lead? What's along that path? Where will you end up?

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Take 3 deep breaths.

Make each breath longer and slower than the one before. Take a moment to feel your feet anchored to the ground below.

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Listen.

What can you hear?

What direction is it coming from? If you wait long enough, can you hear the sound repeat again?

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Squint your eyes so everything is blurry.

What colors can you see? Is there one main color? Can you make out each color of the rainbow?

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Where are you?

Slowly turn in a full circle. Point your arm. Can you guess which way points North? Can you guess which way points home?

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Hug a tree!

If there's no tree, plant both hands on a big rock or the earth itself. Press into the texture. Is it rough? Smooth? Dense? Hollow?

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Plant your feet shoulder-width apart.

Feel the earth. Scoot your feet. Do you feel springy grass? Squishy mud? Grinding gravel? Solid rock?

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Listen to your breath.

Take 5 breaths to listen. Is it fast or slow? Deep or shallow? Notice how it changes as you hike uphill or when you take a break.

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Pick up something loose on the ground.

Is it a rock? A leaf? A piece of bark? Take a moment to touch its texture and feel its weight.

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Sit down. Or stand still.

Take 3 minutes. Close your eyes and slowly take note of each of your senses, one at a time.

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Look up.

How much sky can you see? Notice its color. Reach your arms up to point out the edges where the sky disappears into the trees, hills or buildings in the distance.

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Listen and feel the air.

Air is always moving around us. Can you hear the wind? Can you feel a hint of breeze warm or cool on your face?

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Imagine yourself as an animal living here.

As an animal, what's at your eye level? Where would you shelter here? What would you eat?

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Close your eyes and take a big sniff.

What can you smell? Is it one smell or many different ones? Can you tell what they're coming from?

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Make a mental picture.

Can you remember how you first envisioned this path? Add to that mental image. This time, incorporate all your senses.

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