



STATION 4: SENSE OF SMELL

Pause for a moment. Take a few relaxed breaths. Let your attention move to your sense of smell. Notice five things you weren't smelling a moment ago. Research suggests the forest's natural aromatherapy—the phytoncides released by living plants—create the beneficial effects of spending time in the woods. Close your eyes. Do you smell the soil? Take a leaf, crush it gently in your hand, and hold it to your nose. See if you can detect that smell in the air. When you're ready to continue your walk, keep noticing what you smell. Ask yourself, "What am I smelling now that I was not aware of a moment ago?"



STATION 5: SENSE OF HEARING

You will have ducked under a downed tree, then the trail turns slightly right and goes up a small rise. Pause near the top of the rise for a moment to reflect on your experience so far. Take a few relaxed breaths, and let your attention move to your sense of hearing. Notice five things that you weren't hearing a moment ago. Close your eyes. Can you hear your own breath? The way your feet sound when they stop on the path? How about birds and the sound of wind in the trees? When you're ready to continue your walk, keep noticing what you hear, asking yourself "What am I hearing now that I was not aware of a moment ago?"



STATION 6: OXYGEN AND CO2

Coming around a corner, you see a large, old Doug Fir. Pause to reflect. Take a few relaxed breaths. Move your attention to the plants around you. Choose one plant to focus on. Pay attention to your breath. Reflect on the oxygen you're breathing being produced by plants, while the CO2 used by the plants comes from your out breaths. You and this plant are bound together by a process which produces the most important chemicals needed to sustain life. Take your time. Contemplate. Think of a way to thank your plant friend. When you feel ready, continue your stroll, returning to the trailhead and finishing your Shinrin Yoku experience.

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SHINRIN YOKU Forest Meditation



ALDERBROOK
RESORT & SPA



DYNAMICS OF SHINRIN YOKU



1. The benefits of the forest, especially phytoncides, or essential oils, have healthful effects on our body.



2. As our awareness of the forest effects grow, so do the health benefits. Feel free to play like a curious, joyful child. Revel. Be distracted. Have FUN!



STATION 1: SETTING INTENTION

Pause at the bridge. Think about any “baggage” you may be carrying. Do you have places to go, people to see, tasks to perform? How about concerns and worries? Allow yourself to let these things go for now. Listen to the stream and watch the water flow. Choose a small stone, leaf, or twig and drop it into the stream to symbolize your setting aside your concerns for a while. Watch it flow away. Notice your breath with no attempts to change it.

Linger as long as you’d like. When ready, start walking in a slow and relaxed way. Turn left at the end of the bridge to follow the Big Tree Loop Trail.



STATION 2: SENSE OF SIGHT

Pause for a moment to reflect. Has your gentle focus on breathing changed your perceptions of the forest? Enjoy this moment. Gradually focus on your sense of sight. Notice five things you weren’t seeing a moment ago. What colors do you see? What movements? Where are the areas of shadow and light? Continue your walk, noticing what you see. Ask yourself, “What am I observing now that I was not aware a moment ago?”

Turn right and follow the Big Tree Loop Trail, heading to Station 3. These two red cedars are like old friends.



STATION 3: SENSE OF TOUCH

Pause for a moment. Take a few relaxed breaths. Let your attention move to your sense of feeling. Notice five things you weren’t feeling a moment ago. What does the air feel like on your skin? Is it cool or warm? Moist or dry? Feel your feet on the earth. Touch the bark of a tree. Trace the soil of the forest floor. Continue your walk, noticing what you feel. Ask yourself, “What am I feeling now that I was not aware of a moment ago?”

Turn right here. This is still the Big Tree Loop Trail. The sign points to the left. We are looping in a counterclockwise direction by turning right.