



# How to...

## DID YOU KNOW?

In a study from Stanford University, walking helped people feel more creative by about 60%.



# Go on an evening nature walk

Heading outside with your family after dark can reveal a new world around you.

As it starts getting dark earlier, it's a good time to consider going on a walk at dusk (when the sun has just set) with your family. You may be surprised how different your walking route feels—and looks and sounds—at this time of day. Here's how to get started.

### Plan your route

Talk to the adults who will be joining you about where to go on your evening walk. Sticking to a familiar route can help you feel comfortable knowing your way around in the dark. You could start your walk when the sun is just setting so your eyes begin to adjust before it's fully dark. You could also plan to take your walk on a night when the Moon is full or nearly full, which helps provide natural light.

### Walk together

You'll always want to walk with at least one trusted adult, for guidance and safety. Stay off roads, and stick to pedestrian paths. Make sure you wear layers to be prepared for chilly temperatures. Plan to wear light-colored reflective clothing, including shoes and hats with reflective stripes, so you're easy for drivers to spot.

### Let your eyes adjust

You can bring along a flashlight or wear a headlamp if you have one. Although it's important to bring sources of light with you, if the adults you're walking with feel

it's safe to do so, consider waiting to turn on flashlights or have just one person in the group lead the way with a flashlight. This will allow your eyes time to adapt to the dark. You should notice a difference in how well you can see within a few minutes, but it can take up to 20 minutes for your eyes to fully adjust.

### Use your senses

Most people tend to rely on their sense of sight. When that's dimmed in the dark, you may notice your other senses are sharper. It tends to be quieter outside at night since there are fewer people and cars. What do you hear? You can listen for any nocturnal animals that might be coming out (such as the creatures at right) or how an evening wind rustles the leaves. Try a listening game: Have everyone stop in a safe spot, close their eyes, and stay quiet for 30 seconds. When the time is up, tell one another what you heard.

### Stop and look up

If there is a place on your walk that doesn't have a lot of light pollution, bring along a blanket and take time to sit and stare at the night sky. You can start with the Moon: Where do you see it rising from, and what phase is it in? Is it closer to a full Moon or waning away for a new Moon? You can also look for planets, constellations, and maybe even a passing satellite.



Carry a flashlight.

## 4 creatures that come out at night

These critters are nocturnal, which means they sleep during the day and are active in the dark.

### Moths

Through late fall, you're likely to see moths gathering around porch lights. There are more than 11,000 moth species in the US. How many can you spot?



### Owls

You may hear these birds before you see one. Listen for the "hoot hoot"

sound that many species of owls make, as well as a more screeching bird call, which may come from a common barn owl.

### Raccoons

These animals can often be seen at night prowling the neighborhood for food. You may spot them because their eyes glow in the dark. Raccoons can be fiercely protective of their territory, so if you see one, stay back.



### Bats

To spot bats, carefully watch around lamplights or other dimly lit areas. They typically emerge from tree hollows about 30 minutes after sunset to feed on insects and plants.

