

## Anxiety as a Mediating Variable Between Urban Versus Nature Walks and Executive Functioning

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Recent studies have shown that nature walks have a positive impact on affect, general health and wellbeing, and restoring executive functioning, whereas urban settings can have negative effects (Barton & Pretty, 2010; Bratman et al., 2015; Laumann et al., 2003; McAllister et al., 2017; Schutte et al., 2017). However, little research has been done on the effects of these walks on anxiety, and no one has directly induced anxiety to investigate whether it is a mediating variable in the relationship between urban versus nature walks and executive functioning. The present mediation study sought to examine the effects of nature versus urban walks on both anxiety and executive functioning and to determine if anxiety is a mediating variable. Participants completed a series of tasks including flanker tasks to measure executive functioning, questionnaires to measure state anxiety, a mild anxiety-inducing task, and an urban or nature walk. It was hypothesized that nature walks reduce state anxiety, leading to improved executive functioning, and that urban walks increase anxiety and therefore decrease executive functioning. Results supported this general idea. This research may contribute to the knowledge of effective treatments or interventions for people with anxiety.