

Effect of coastal walks and engagement interventions on pro-environmental behavior

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Abstract

Exposure to nature, particularly coastal landscapes, is shown to have a positive effect on pro-environmental behavior. However, research has mainly focused on virtual exposure and investigation of potential pathways to maximize this effect remains limited. We conducted an experimental study to assess the effect of real-life exposure to a coastal (vs. urban) landscape on performance in the WEPT, and to compare differential effects of mindful engagement vs. mind-wandering vs. distraction during coastal exposure. Adult participants (22 to 78 years old) took part in a 20-minute guided walk at the beach or in an urban street. Those walking at the beach were instructed to either be mindful of their surroundings, let their mind wander, or follow mental visualization tasks. No significant group difference was found in performance in the WEPT after the walk. We discuss theoretical and practical considerations when examining the relationship between nature and pro-environmental behavior.