

SIT SPOTS

***I use waterproof camping mats for sit-upons. I cut them up into squares for the kids to sit on outside and they bring them whenever we do any outdoor activity. You can also easily create sit-upons as well: [Make Your Own Sit-Upon](#). Even a plastic bag with newspaper inside would work!

Sit spot mindful forest school activity

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the state of being conscious or aware of something. Taking a mindful look at our surroundings means we focus our senses on what's around us, calmly and with intention. We still hear, smell, think, and feel, but we stay in the moment, letting the sensations be present, but passing.

Mindful meditation, especially in nature, has great benefits for our health. It can reduce stress, increase focus, lower blood pressure, and help manage pain.

We can use mindfulness in forest school to feel a closer connection with the forest and the planet, to notice things we usually overlook, and to get a deep appreciation and understanding of the natural world.

Sit spot forest school mindfulness activity

A simple way to introduce mindfulness to children is with a sit spot activity.

A sit spot is a place to stop and sit, somewhere you can pause a while. Anywhere can be a sit spot: a log, leaning on a tree trunk, sitting up in

the branches, a place along a river bank, a bench in a park, or a corner of a meadow.

Choose your own special sit spot, somewhere you can go back to regularly and sit in again and again.

:: Sit down, get comfortable, and wait.

:: You can intentionally draw your attention to what you can see, what you can hear, what you can feel, what you can smell.

:: Look down.

:: Look up.

:: Close your eyes for a while, then open them.

:: Breathe in deep and release your breath. Let your breathing patterns rise and fall naturally and stay as long as you can.

:: If your attention wanders, that's ok; bring your focus back and rest again.

It's up to you how long you stay. You might find it hard to sit for a few minutes at the beginning, but with practice you can extend your sit spot time longer and longer.

Learning from our sit spot

The more time you spend in your sit spot, the more you will notice your surroundings.

Repeat your sit spot meditation at different times of day, and night, at different times of year, in different weathers, and when you are in different moods. You'll notice all sorts of things!

By returning to the same sit spot over time you might observe:

:: the changing seasons

:: the changing textures

:: new growth

:: new decay

:: new animals

:: smaller things

:: tiny details

:: things you have previously overlooked

Introducing a sit spot to children

Not all children welcome the idea of being still and quiet! There are no hard and fast rules about exactly how, and for how long, you have to stay in a sit spot, but if you can get your children to give it a try they might just fall in love with it.

Try these ideas to get things started:

:: model it yourself, sharing your excitement about visiting your special sit spot and telling your children they might, if they are also very lucky, find a sit spot of their own

:: try a treasure hunt instead, to introduce the idea that the forest is full of amazing things to spot. You can use this [forest treasure hunt printable](#)

:: play i-spy, to get the noticing started in a fun and sociable way

:: Wilderness Awareness suggests [sitting with a little bird seed on your body](#) and seeing if a bird wants to come and eat some – how lovely!

:: link in to what your children love: maybe they'd like the idea of being a spy and looking for tiny clues in the forest, or maybe they'd like to be a ninja creeping silently along

::(pretend to)sit around a campfire to begin with, toasting marshmallows as a focus, and chatting about what you can all notice about your surroundings

:: then invite your children to select their own special sit spot, somewhere that's appealing to them – which could be up in the branches of a tree!