



From Cochrane

## Feel better by planting trees and taking up yoga

Planting trees or picking up litter is good for the environment and makes you feel better, but don't cancel the health insurance just yet — the evidence for genuine health benefits is limited. That's the finding of a review of 19 studies of outdoor environmental enhancement and conservation activities. People taking part in these activities perceived a range of benefits, including increased social contact and sense of achievement. It's one more reason to support Clean Up Australia Day (doi: [10.1002/14651858.CD010351.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD010351.pub2)).

Similarly, asthma sufferers who want more control over their symptoms should consider yoga in addition to their usual medication. A recent review of 15 trials involving over 1000 men and women with mild to moderate asthma found that yoga exercise reduced the impact of asthma on quality of life and led to small improvements in symptoms. The effects on lung function and medication use were inconclusive (doi: [10.1002/14651858.CD010346.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD010346.pub2)).

Another recent asthma review sought to compare different durations and doses of oral steroids for relieving symptoms

in people experiencing asthma attacks. Despite 18 trials involving over 2400 adults and children, only low quality evidence was found. Few studies could be combined in any meaningful way, making it difficult to tell whether longer or shorter courses or higher or lower doses are better or safer (doi: [10.1002/14651858.CD011801.pub2](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD011801.pub2)).

There's no disguising the target demographic for football broadcasts with the constant reminder that even if men are not bald yet, they soon will be. But what of the less talked about female pattern hair loss? Twenty-five new studies have been added to the pile in the recent update of treatment options that now includes 47 trials of nearly 5300 women. There are many comparisons to navigate but, in short, minoxidil (either 2% or 5%) is more effective than placebo, finasteride is not, and laser comb therapy, although not rated as better than sham therapy by participants, did result in an important increase in hair growth (doi: [10.1002/14651858.CD007628.pub4](https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD007628.pub4)).

For more on these and other reviews, visit the Cochrane Library at [www.cochranelibrary.com](http://www.cochranelibrary.com).

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