

Remember recreation?

Noun; activity done for enjoyment when one is not working.

late Middle English (also in the sense 'mental or spiritual consolation'): via Old French from Latin *recreatio* (n-), from *recreare* 'create again, renew'.

Summer time for many of us means taking a break from everyday life and having some free time and some chosen activities. Ideally, this is a time for rest from work, renewal, and re-creation – an opportunity to re-charge batteries. For people in the recreation sector, staff shortages, funding challenges, and changes in the way we work has put extra pressure on remaining staff. And supporting staff or clients through these changes can take its toll.

Recreation is one way to restore a sense of wellbeing, and create positive feelings. And one way to avoid [burnout](#). Approaching the summer in pursuit of leisure, asks that we enjoy freedoms, and do things for pleasure.

Today, even the precious concept of leisure has been undermined, to the extent that much of people's so-called leisure time is now devoted to ticking off activities or trying to achieve long-term 'leisure' goals – the opposite to what 'leisure' is all about; A freely chosen activity that is an end in itself *not a means to an end*. In this article on [how we view free time](#), Imtiaz says that:

"Deciding how to spend leisure time can be very stressful. Some people feel enormous pressure to maximise their downtime with the best choices"

This pressure has the very opposite effect on people than what they might have hoped for, by providing yet another thing to worry about.

So how can we really use our free time over the summer to re-create, to experience the benefits of leisure?



Figure 1 Stuff. Photographer Ana Galloway, accessed from <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/prosper/300124157/harnessing-the-healing-power-of-nature>

Wellbeing models

There are two well known wellbeing models with a foundation of balance – and both have strong links to investing in ourselves for a greater benefit.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

With its strong foundations and four equal sides, the symbol of the whareniui illustrates the four dimensions of Māori well-being, [Te Whare Tapa Whā model](#)

If any dimension is missing or damaged, people and their whanau and communities may become 'unbalanced' and subsequently unwell.

Five ways to wellbeing

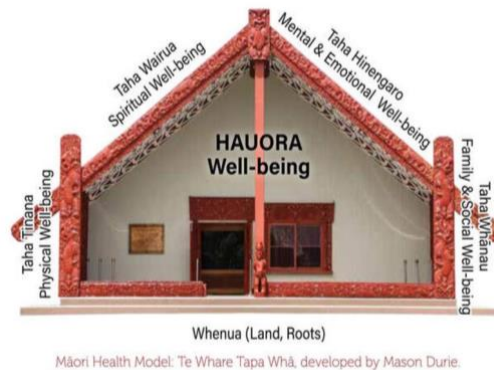
Most people are now familiar with the concept of the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#), but it can be helpful to remind ourselves that we too need to take care, look at ourselves, and think about what we need to feel good or to feel better. We can 'Re-create' ourselves literally through reconnecting with the people, places, and activities, that we love the most.

Taha Whānau – family and social wellbeing Connect...with family, whanau, or friends

For some, re-building lost connections may be important, as a sense of disconnection can create depression and anxiety. [Social prescriptions](#) can be as effective as anti-depressants for people.

For others, connecting via through volunteering can be powerful for creating positive emotions, and also ticks the 'Give' strategy.

Be with others – enjoy food, celebrations, play together



Māori Health Model: Te Whare Tapa Whā, developed by Mason Durie.

Figure 2 Te Whare Tapa Whā

<https://nzje.ac.nz/blog-te-taua-moana-marae-wananga/te-whare-tapa-wha/>



Taha Hinengaro – Mental and emotional well-being

Learn...experiment, try, be open

Be willing to embrace new experiences. By learning something new, we get a sense of challenge and achievement, both of which are [contributors to our wellbeing](#).

Check out Insights 32 Mental Wellbeing Mindsets

Be mindful, be grateful, choose positive mindsets, laugh, do things that bring you joy, be creative

Give...be generous with your time and energy

We know that acts of kindness, volunteering and contributing to our communities has a [positive impact](#). Whether it's supporting an elderly neighbour, coaching a team or helping in the local stream care group – there are multiple benefits.

Care for our whenua, our awa, our moana

Taha Wairua – Spiritual Well-being

Notice...what we see, hear, taste, smell and touch

Taking notice of the simple things that bring us joy is another aspect of wellbeing: this will be unique to each of us. If we have good mental health - we are able to be more calm, aware, and able to take things in.

Te toto o te tangata, he kai; te oranga o te tangata, he whenua.
While food provides the blood in our veins, our health is drawn from the land.

[Being in nature](#) can have a huge impact on our mental health. Or we can take time just to be with ourselves. Use apps that encourage simple meditation techniques, encouraging us to be more in the moment, and connected to our physical selves.

Check out Insights 28: Refuge restoration and renewal in Urban Aotearoa

Appreciate the planet, the people who have gone before

Taha Tinana – physical wellbeing

Be Active...physically

Recreation professionals know the benefits of activity, and you promote it in your work. But how much time or energy do you have for your own activity? What are the things you've missed doing and would love to get back to? Are there things you're already doing and want to do more of? Is there something new you'd like to try?

Whatever you enjoy, now's the time enjoy it. We are walking more since the lockdowns, and [one participant says](#):

I am interested in te whare tapa whā, the holistic health model. And for me, my taha wairua, my spiritual side, is nourished by walking on the beach because of the connection with nature and the beauty that we see. It fills my cup if you like.

Whether you're taking a long hike in the hills, eating with family at the beach or your local park, or just pottering in your garden – nature heals and relaxes us.

There is plenty of evidence now pointing to the restorative powers of nature. Feeling connected, high quality natural spaces/places, equity of access and other aspects of the power of green are covered in [this report](#).

As well, exercise is a powerful predictor of [positive mental health](#).

Check out Insights 24: Well minds - the impact of recreation on rangatahi

Move
– dance, walk, swim, garden, bike, play

“If you approach a holiday with a ‘should’ mindset, you might be messing it up,” warns Malkoc. “Don’t let your belief that you ‘need to get the best out of this’ get the best of you.”

