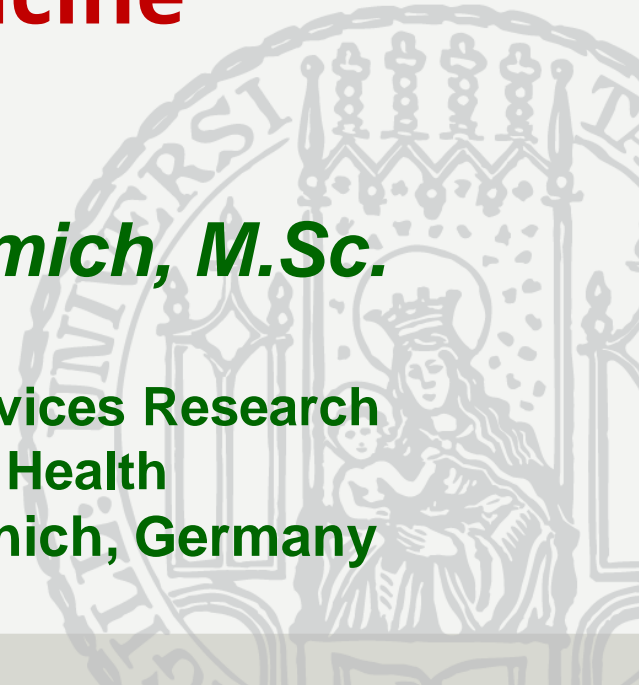


Forest Therapy in Health Resort Medicine

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Forest therapy in Health Resort Medicine

Content



1. Principles of Health Resort Medicine
2. Forest Therapy Programme
3. Example of a 3-week cure concept
4. Cure and Healing Forests
5. Adaptation of Indoor/Clinical Programmes





Principles of Health Resort Medicine (HRM)

- field of medicine with long-lasting tradition worldwide
- based on its local natural resources, e.g.
 - balneo- and hydrotherapy
 - climatotherapy
 - special cure regimes, e.g. Kneipp therapy
- includes different interventions and methods for health promotion, prevention, therapy and rehabilitation on a very professional level
- based on chronobiological rhythm to place the intervention on the most effective time of day

Kneipp therapy: traditional healing method

Sebastian Kneipp,
founder of **Kneipp
therapy** in the **1870s**:
Summer retreat in the
forest

- relaxation
- breathing exercises
in the coniferous
forests
- physical training
- water immersions
(to heal his TB)



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Multimodal Forest Therapy Programme (FTP) – 3 weeks

Indications: mental health disorders, cardio-respiratory, musculoskeletal, neurological or stress related diseases, post-covid syndrome, different rehabilitation processes, ...

- specific HRM intervention/technique/remedy
- sport training: endurance training on terrain cure trails
- physiotherapy in forest (green back school, proprioception)
- nature-based mindfulness and compassion training for mental and emotional well-being, cognitive restoration, stress reduction, improvement of psychiatric diseases
- breathing exercises/training in the forest
- psycho-educational training, e.g. CBT, skill transfer

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Forest Therapy Programme



Overall goals of a multimodal rehab programme

- improvement of psychological and cognitive status
- increase of physical performance, balance, gait status
- training in nature-based mindfulness practice, implementation of nature connectedness
- developing physical resilience (climatotherapy, mindfulness practices, forest therapy)
- decrease burden of disease to improve health, well-being, self-perception and self-esteem
- ability to recognize key warning symptoms
- learn to maintain a healthy lifestyle through nature contacts

Forest therapy in Health Resort Medicine

3. Example of a 3-week cure concept



Table 1: Structured cure plan for a 3 week rehabilitation program for mental health disorders in (apine) health resorts. The activity level is described in A-days (rest) and b-days (load).

1st week – reduced load/intensity					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)
9-10 am	Breathing exercises	Mindful walking	Breathing exercises	Mindful walking	Breathing exercises
10:30-12 am	Psychoeducation 1	Psychoeducation 2	Climatotherapy: Heliotherapy	Psychoeducation 3	Psychoeducation 4
12-2 pm	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping
2-4 pm	Forest therapy	Hot water immersion	Climatotherapy: Fresh air rest cure	Hot water immersion	Forest therapy
4-5 pm	Inhalation	Physiotherapy	Inhalation	Physiotherapy	Inhalation
2nd week – normal load/intensity					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)
9-10 am	Mindful walking	Breathing exercises	Balance training	Climatotherapy: Fresh air rest cure	Mindful walking
10:30-12 am	Psychoeducation 5	Psychoeducation 6	Climatotherapy: Fresh air rest cure	Psychoeducation 7	Psychoeducation 8
12-2 pm	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping
2-4 pm	Hot water immersion	Forest therapy	Climatotherapy: Terrain cure	Forest therapy	Hot water immersion
4-5 pm	Physiotherapy	Inhalations	Physiotherapy	Inhalations	Physiotherapy

Immich & Schuh (2019)

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Example of a 3-week cure concept



3rd week – normal to increased load/intensity

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)	Day A (rest)	Day B (load)
9-10 am	Balance training	Breathing exercises	Mindful walking	Breathing exercises	Mindful walking
10:30-12 am	Psychoeducation 9	Climatotherapy: Heliotherapy	Climatotherapy: Terrain cure	Psychoeducation 10	Climatotherapy: Terrain cure
12-2 pm	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping	Climatotherapy: Terrain cure	Lunch break with power napping	Lunch break with power napping
2-4 pm	Hot water immersion	Forest therapy	Climatotherapy: Terrain cure	Forest therapy	Program evaluation, feedback
4-5 pm	Physiotherapy	Inhalations	Physiotherapy	Inhalations	Farewell and departure

(Immich & Schuh 2019)

Cure concept is based on

- **chronobiology** – specific time and daily change in rest/load
- **evidence** of CAM/European traditional medicine
- **local health resort remedy** (water, mud, climate, ...)
- **indication-based forest therapy interventions**

Forest therapy in Health Resort Medicine

4. Cure and Healing forests



Successful implementation of project in 7/2022
(funded by the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs)

The potential of the forests as a site-specific healing tool in Bavarian health resorts - developing a guideline of structural requirements in 15 pilot sites



Development of certification and designation standards for cure and healing forests (BayKK KuH) for communities, clinic/rehab settings, forest owners





Criteria catalogue is divided into 4 sub-categories:

- **general requirements:** basic & general criteria (forest size, accessibility, topography or terrain of the forest area, tranquillity and air purity in the forest stand)
- **forest-specific conditions** (tree population, special features in the forest, sensory spaces, forest environment and forest management)
- **infrastructure (facultative)** (trail networks, buildings, safety issues)
- **different interventions** for health promotion and prevention



Requirements of a Cure Forest vs. Healing Forest

Basic requirements for a cure forest

- Diverse, species-rich and structurally rich forest
 - Sufficiently large, easily accessible forest area
 - Forest interior climate with high air purity in the stand
 - Quiet inside the forest, little to no noise pollution
 - Rest and activity zone
 - Different forest images or sensory spaces
 - Necessary road safety and maintenance of the forest stand
 - longer-term usage permit
-
- Qualified offer for prevention
 - Qualified personnel: certified forest health trainers

Extended requirements for a healing forest

- Rest and activity zone with therapy places or areas
 - As short a distance as possible to the cure centre, rehabilitation facility, clinic (optimal: within walking distance)
 - Good accessibility of the forest areas, in parts barrier-free.
 - Increased requirements for the general healing effect of the forest (in particular tranquillity, air purity)
 - Indication-related therapeutic infrastructural equipment
 - Increased traffic safety obligation and adapted safety infrastructure
 - longer-term usage permit
-
- Medical-therapeutic concept for the treatment of special indications
 - Specialist staff with basic therapeutic qualifications and additional forest therapy training

Cure forest = health promotion/prevention

Healing forest = therapy

Forest therapy in Health Resort Medicine

Cure and Healing forests

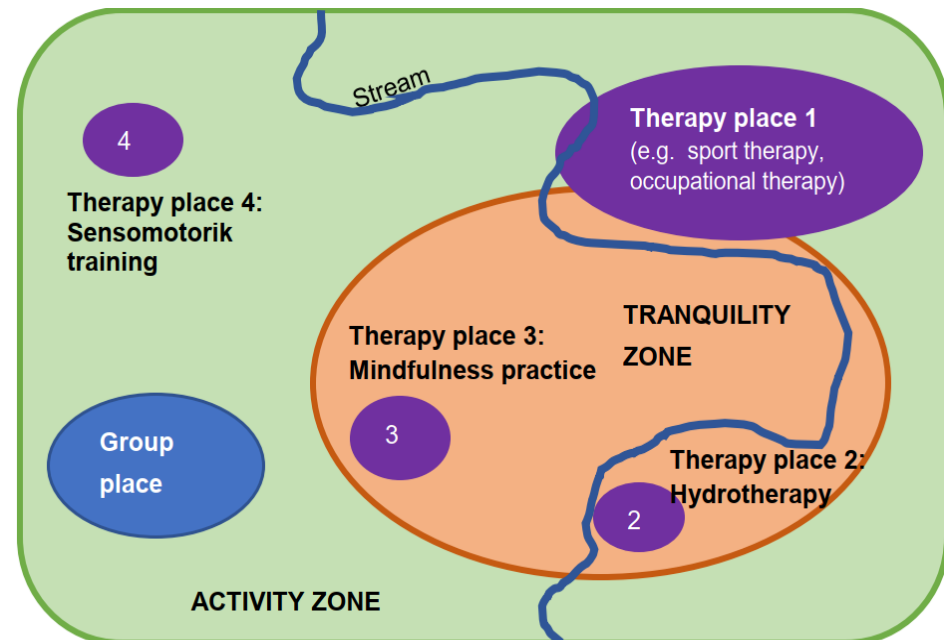
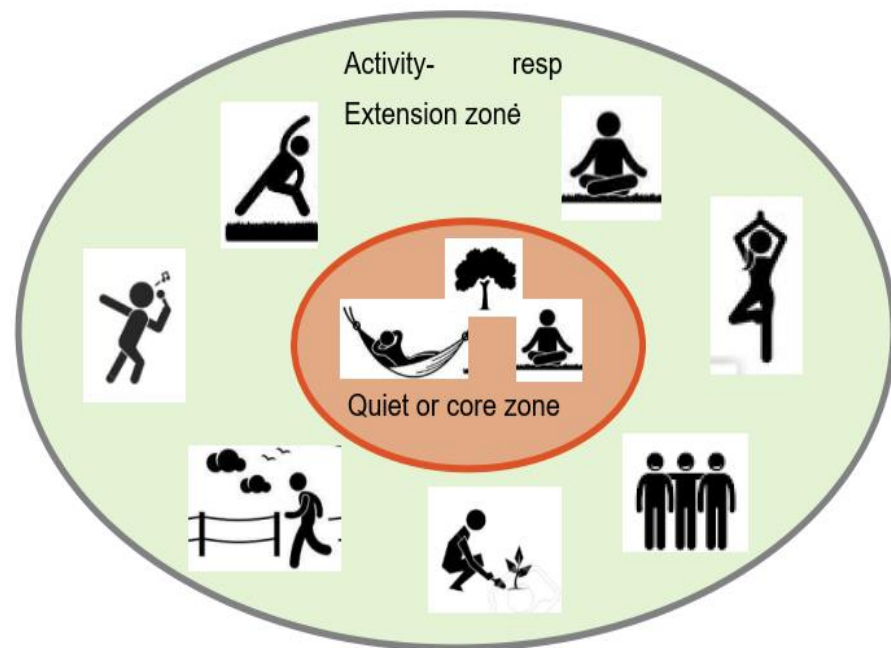


Cure Forest

vs

Healing Forest

Different zones for special methods/indications!



Forest therapy in Health Resort Medicine

5. Adaptations of indoor/clinical programmes



Forest therapy as a multi-sensory nature-connectedness approach

can be easily combined with

- traditional CAM
- therapeutical methods

Regenerative procedures or methods:

- Mindfulness practice (basic MBSR exercises)
- Body-mind methods (Tai Chi, Yoga, Qigong)
- Climatherapeutic procedures such as fresh air reclining cure, heliotherapy
- Breathing therapy and breathing training, voice training (tones), olfactory training
- Relaxation therapy (progressive muscle relaxation)
- Body-oriented psychotherapy with body awareness exercises/ body consciousness training, concentrative movement therapy, breathing exercises
- patient-centred talk therapy
- art-therapeutic methods

Activating procedures or methods:

- Climatic therapy: Climatic terrain cure
- Exercise therapy: endurance-based or coordination-based (e.g. stretching, fascia training), gymnastics, light hiking,
- Green Gym: Green back school, gait school, sensorimotor training, balance training,
- Kneipp therapy (water treading, dew treading, barefoot walking)
- Occupational therapy to improve gross and fine motor skills (e.g. working with natural materials such as chopping wood, carving, handicrafts, laying mandalas), fall prophylaxis (walking meditation on forest floor)

Literature

