

SCIENTISTS PROVE THAT YOU LIVE LONGER OUTSIDE THE CITY, BUT NOT TOO FAR AWAY

Many studies show that for optimal health, long life and happiness there is no question - you should live between 30 minutes and 60 minutes outside the border of cities. In other words, you should live close, but not too close. Also, you should not live very densely, such as in an apartment block, but also not in a lonely farmhouse. For the best results, you should live 30 minutes+ from a major city, in a medium density community of houses or row houses without apartment blocks. Statistics also show that education and a reasonable level of income improve your health and lifespan.

Why does this work? There are a number of reasons:

1. **Happiness** – it has been shown that living in the country increases your happiness. For more information, see the study below by Professor Robert Cummins.
2. **Pollution** – if you live in or near a city, even 15 minutes away, then you will be affected by petrol fumes from cars, strong radio, mobile phone and television signals, which are invisible but are constantly travelling through your body, noise pollution which causes stress, headaches, poor sleep and low-level annoyance, ozone, which is higher in cities and various other factors. However, interestingly electrical lines are shown to have a positive health effect due to the generation of negative ions around the line, which are beneficial for a longer life. <http://www.nutritionreview.org/library/negative.ions.php>
3. **Income** – living within one hour of the city means you can still earn a good income and be connected to or visit various city facilities while have lower living costs. Higher income/lower living costs outside the city gives better spending power for improved healthcare, good foods and a natural living environment.
4. **Stress** – city living or close-to-city living city is more stressful. http://bodyodd.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/06/22/6918508-city-living-stresses-you-out-study-confirms?lite
5. **Education** – living 30 minutes or more outside a city means you can choose a local education or education in a nearby city. Educated people have been shown to make more right health choices and be conscious of how to live a modern and positive life.
6. **Standards** – many city living places have lower health standards, e.g. they are damp, have mould or are located close to a neighbour with mould, have old pipes in the house or are connected to an old central water or sewage network (for instance you can see this from bath water that is not pure and clear). All of these factors have a negative health impact. http://healthychild.org/blog/comments/safe_pipes_mean_safe_water/
7. **Disease** – diseases and germs spread more quickly within crowded city spaces. This is promoted by many simple things such as many hands on the same door handles, sick people crowded together and so on. <http://www.google.ee/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=illness%20spreads%20in%20cities&source=web&cd=6&sqj=2&ved=0CEoQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.yorku.ca%2Frsars2003%2FGlobalCitiesAndTheSpreadOfInfectiousDisease.pdf&ei=U-6fT7K2NcbN4QTS2fCfAw&usg=AFQjCNGQAKWCzkXSaTgYFgwYXbXuGpLvqQ>
8. **Crowds** – too many people too close together do not allow you to have your own space, creating nega-

tive stress. This is true in the city and close to the city. At the same time, people do need neighbours. Living within a community and having contact with others is good for health and wellbeing. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2006988/A-rural-life-better-Living-concrete-jungle-really-stressful-make-vulnerable-depression.html>

9. **Diet** – People in cities live a "concrete" existence and generally have a poorer diet, less exercise, are more sedentary, go outside less and spend less time with friends and family.
10. **City-kids** – everyone knows kids prefer the country. City-kids spend a longer amount of time inside behind the computer, eating fast food and TV dinners and have started to put on more weight. <http://typeparent.com/benefits-to-living-in-the-country.html>
11. **Country kids** – are tougher; they grow up with less allergies, less asthma, a stronger and healthier physique and less autoimmune diseases than city or those closer than 30 minutes from the city. <http://alan-mcnaire.suite101.com/is-it-healthier-to-live-in-the-country-a307028>
12. **Crime** – there is more crime in the city, http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/73200
13. **Sexually Transmitted Diseases** – in the city higher rates of STDs, lower weight (unhealthy) babies and interestingly even consume alcohol more excessively than in the country although it has long been thought the other way around.
14. **Mental Illness** – city dwellers have a higher percentage of mental health problems – a study in 2010 shows 39% more mood disorders and 21% more anxiety disorders if you live in the city. Another study in the journal Nature in July 2011 explained that German researchers monitored the brain waves of urban and rural residents and suggested that people who grow up in cities may process stress less effectively. http://www.naturalnews.com/032877_country_life_longevity.html

In summary, there is always debate and some people prefer one type of life or the other; but why not both? You can live 30 to 60 minutes away from the city and still benefit from being close by while having all the health benefits associated with country living.

Statistics Estonia shows that since 2000 the trend for Estonian families and second-life stage groups is to move away from the city into smaller communities, for instance which are within 30–60 minutes driving distance of a major city. This is backed up by what most people in developed European nations desire. When you have the opportunity or the money, you move 30 minutes or more away from the city for more happiness and health benefits. People who value health, nature, family and their own private space tend to move towards more rural living areas.

The best of both worlds for people in Estonia could really be to live healthily, 30+ minutes drive from the border of the city for both an improved life and so you can work or visit the city whenever you want.

Appendix I – Professor Robert Cummins - What kind of life do you need to be happy?

Professor Robert Cummins of Victoria's Deakin University has spent 15 years measuring our quality of life and produced a massive report on our wellbeing.

Cummins explains that living in the country: "Is a state of happiness but it's not the short-term happiness that you get when you find ten (Euros). It's asking deep in ourselves how we feel about our own mood."

Cummins surveyed 28,000 people over a longer time period and discovered the type of place most of us feel we would be happiest living. "It's not a capital city it's a regional centre that is close to the amenities people want and yet is small enough for people to have a sense of neighbourliness and a sense of community that is very missing usually from the cities or their suburbs," he says, "and as a kid, what more do you want than blue skies and green grass"

"Thanks to its traditionally slower pace, country living allows individuals a daily opportunity to retreat and maintain perspective on life. While today's society overall continues to speed along at ever-increasing speeds, the rural life, taking its cue from slow-but-steady Mother Nature, seems to be a constant reminder that in the final analysis, there really is no rush. City living certainly possesses a quickening excitement in the eyes of its beholder; but for a more fulfilled life, you require more balance to appreciate that excitement and there must also be times of steady calm. This calm is quickly realised while driving on an old back road, grilling in your own back garden with friends, sitting in the still silence of a starlit night or walking through the wisps of an overgrown field. You just can't get that experience close to the city. Country living helps to bring us back to a more centered place of mental and spiritual clarity, clarity that serves as a springboard for even greater appreciation of living in general, regardless of the setting," Cummins concludes.

Appendix 2 – Trends and views from different people

More and more people are moving out of the city, away from the suburbs and into the country – 30 minutes or more drive from the city.

What do people say about the difference between city and country living?

"It's definitely been a big adjustment. I left my city way of life that I was used to. I still visit friends and go to the city but I found I have more time for family and myself – it's a more centered and balanced life here. I am enjoying my new life, especially the community spirit. There were really big fires here at New Year's Eve. Also Janipäev fires were great and just the way the community got behind it straightaway was fantastic".

"It's the relaxed pace and friendly atmosphere that gives you a good feeling of wellbeing," says one local. "So it's being less stressed that's going to make you healthy you think?", "Absolutely. The slower pace is good for your health."

"I feel fortunate that I have grown up in a rural area. I would never trade in my memories of playing in a stream, climbing trees galore, swimming in the river, and hiking, all within a half kilometer from my house. I sometimes feel sorry for my friends who were surrounded by asphalt, concrete, and McDonald's".

"Country Living provides a more fulfilling and well-rounded domestic experience than city living. First, country living provides a more balanced atmosphere for mental and spiritual clarity. Second, country living provides for a greater sense of privacy and emotional security. Finally, country living allows for the best options of both worlds."