



Media Contact:
Shelly Mosley
931-797-1483
smosley@mghus.com

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Americans Preach "Touch Grass" as Self Care. They Just Can't Seem to Do It.

*Nearly eight in 10 adults report feeling guilty choosing screen time over outdoor time
in new NaturaLawn of America® survey*

FREDERICK, Md., (September 23, 2026) – The phrase “touch grass” may have started as internet slang, but a new survey from [NaturaLawn® of America](#) suggests it reflects a very real concern: Americans increasingly feel the need to step away from screens and spend more time outside – even if they’re struggling to do it.

For the roughly three in four American adults who know the phrase, it's become shorthand for a mental reset. 83.2% who've heard “touch grass” have used it at least once, with most using it to mean unplugging from technology (54%) or getting outside (52%), and only about one in four taking it literally.

The “Touch Grass” paradox: Americans preach it but can’t seem to do it.

Nearly eight in 10 (78%) adults feel guilty choosing screen time over outdoor time, and three out of four (76%) feel the need to disconnect at least once a week. Yet over the past month, more than a third only managed 20 screen-free minutes outdoors on two or fewer days, with one in nine managing none at all.

"The phrase ‘touch grass’ may have started on the internet, but the screen fatigue behind it is very real,” said Theresa Smith, SVP for NaturaLawn® of America. “There’s a clear desire to break free from screens, but intention alone isn’t getting people outdoors. We need to bridge the gap between knowing we need that mental reset and actually giving ourselves the space to take one.”

Outdoor spaces at home are the easiest place to “touch grass,” but they have to feel worth 20 screen-free minutes. What did Americans say would actually get them to “touch grass” more often?

- Fewer bugs (34%)
- More comfortable space to sit (33%)
- Healthy green lawn (19.4%)

Parents are trading screen time for green time by re-creating their favorite childhood memories.

Reclaiming the yard isn’t just a personal challenge for adults; for parents, it’s a mission to create better habits for their children.

83.2% of adults reported spending unstructured time outside at least several times per week as a child, and 92.4% agree children today get less unstructured time outdoors than past generations. The biggest barrier? Parents and guardians say screen time, with 34.5% specifying video games and 31.4% specifying social media.

To fight the screen time takeover, nearly eight in 10 parents are re-creating their childhood's outdoor experiences as they try to make outdoor time part of their family's routine once more, including:

- Classic games like tag/hide-and-seek (38.8%)
- Casual sports (34.7%)
- Watching Sunsets or Stargazing (29.8%)

However, bringing play back to the backyard introduces a modern worry: what's on the lawn itself. Two in three parents expressed concern about exposure to traditional lawn chemicals and pesticides when letting their kids run barefoot or lie in the grass. But, 75.2% of parents are more likely to let kids play outside in a yard maintained with organic-based practices.

"For today's parents, 'touch grass' speaks directly to our efforts to raise a healthier, more grounded generation. By re-creating our favorite childhood outdoor memories, we aren't just getting kids outside today, we're teaching them how to manage stress and reset for the rest of their lives. And, an organic-based, worry-free yard gives parents the peace of mind to let those healthy habits take root," Smith explains.

Reclaiming the backyard is more than a break from screens. It's about creating habits that help children and adults alike respond to feelings of stress or overwhelm from work, school or everyday life in a healthy way and having a safe place to do it. For adults seeking a much-needed mental reset and parents striving to give their children an active, nostalgic childhood, the answer starts right outside the back door.

About the Survey

Results are based on a national survey of 1,137 U.S. residents ages 18-61. The survey was fielded August 22-23, 2026 using SurveyMonkey Audience. The margin of error is +/- 2.964%

About NaturaLawn of America

NaturaLawn® of America has been providing an environmentally-friendly approach to lawn care since 1987. NaturaLawn is a national lawn care franchise system with 100 licenses, servicing over 125,000 customers in 27 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit <https://naturalawn.com/>.

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