

6 WAYS TO MIX UP YOUR WALK

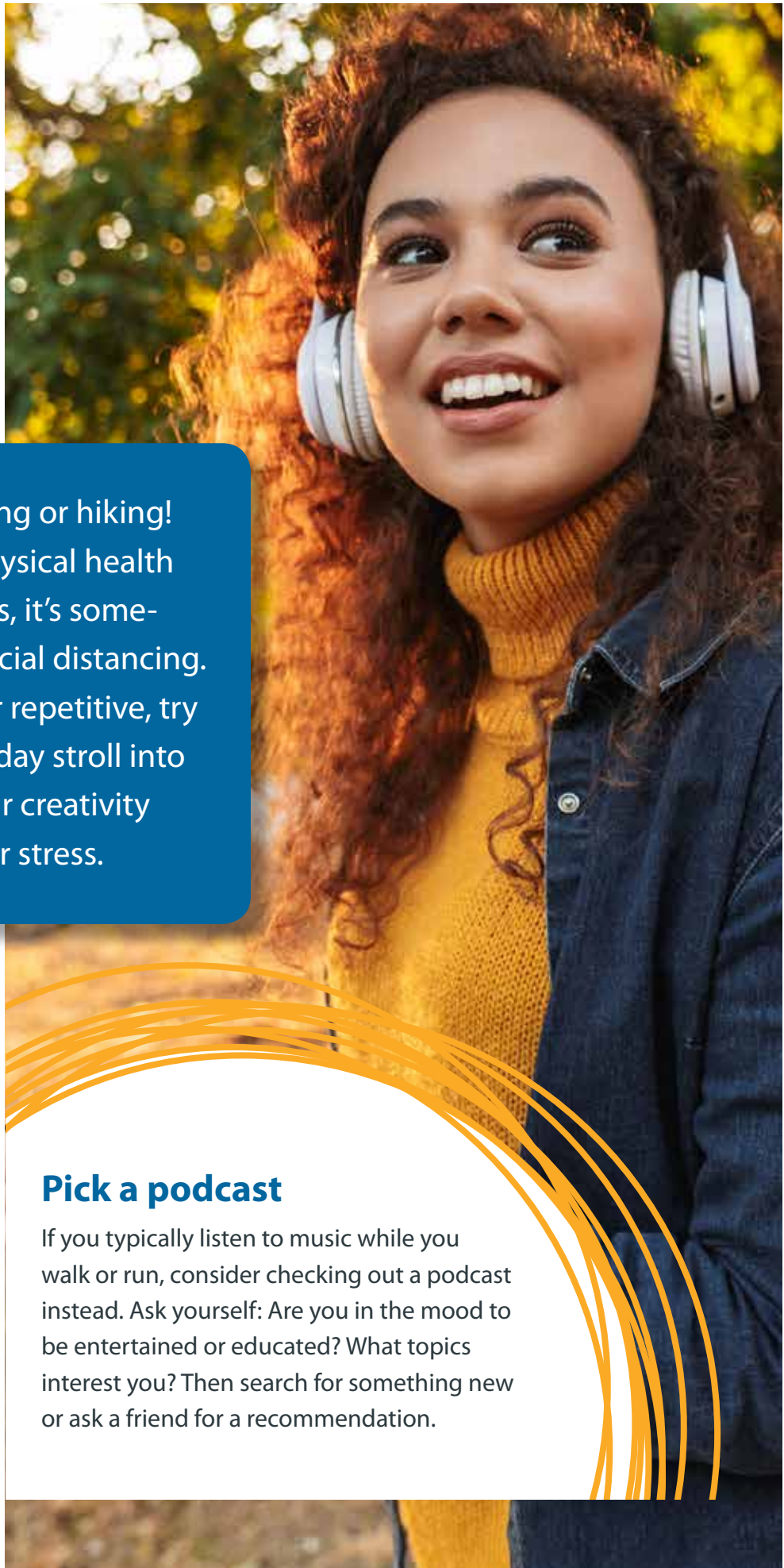
It's a great time of year for walking or hiking! Walking can boost both your physical health and your mental well-being. Plus, it's something you can do while safely social distancing. But if you find walking boring or repetitive, try these ideas for turning an everyday stroll into an adventure that can spark your creativity and help take your mind off your stress.

Design a scavenger hunt

Print out a list of things you might find in your neighborhood or on a trail, then check them off as you go. Your heightened sense of observation might help you see your familiar route in a whole new light! If you're walking with family or friends, challenge them to a friendly competition to see who can spot each thing first – or the most.

Pick a podcast

If you typically listen to music while you walk or run, consider checking out a podcast instead. Ask yourself: Are you in the mood to be entertained or educated? What topics interest you? Then search for something new or ask a friend for a recommendation.



Practice moving meditation

Walking meditations can help relieve stress and increase mindfulness. They're a great option if you want to bring your body and mind in sync without sitting still. You can find guided walking meditations and tips online. Walking meditations don't need to be long, so they're ideal if you only have time for a walk around the block.



Dial up the fitness

You'll get a bigger return on your exercise investment if you add cardio or strength-training intervals to your walk. Some walking trails have built-in activities you can stop and do along the way. Or you could simply pause periodically to do things like push-ups, jumping jacks or high knees to keep your heart rate up and work more muscle groups. Add some hand, wrist or ankle weights if you want to challenge yourself.



Stop to smell the roses

Take your dog for a walk and follow their lead. Stop when they stop. See what they see (or smell). Don't have a dog? Offer to walk a neighbor's furry friend. You'll gain a new perspective and accomplish a good deed.

Document your journey

Take your phone or camera along and photograph whatever catches your eye. Or pick a theme like textures, shapes or colors and keep your eye out for shots to take along the path. This exercise will get your creative juices flowing during and after your walk as you can reference them later for inspiration.

