



**YourHealth**  
By Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare



GENERAL WELLNESS

## FALL INTO FUN OUTDOOR FITNESS OPPORTUNITIES

By *Your Health Blog*

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Autumn is awesome—and it's not the pumpkin spice that's calling to us (although if that's your bag, you do you!).

Our favorite thing about fall is the incredible scenery and invigorating weather, which makes us look for any opportunity to spend more time outside. While hayrides, bonfires and sleepy sunsets have our hearts, we *also* love the unique physical activities that accompany the fall season. Some (like pumpkin picking!) are clearly seasonal, while others (hiking, anyone?) can be done year-round but pack an especially magical punch amidst the fall foliage and 60-degree days.

[Healthier 901](#) is all about connecting people across the Mid-South with the right resources to improve their overall health and wellness, and in honor of autumn, we're here to shout out the enormous benefits of outdoor exercise. True, exercise of any kind improves our mental health, aids in weight management and reduces our risk for chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer—but outdoor fitness takes the wellness benefits to a whole new level!

"In addition to the calories we burn and other physical health benefits, exercising outdoors helps us feel more revitalized and can boost our self-esteem and reduce anxiety," said Farra Hych, director of Rehab Services with Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. "Outdoor exercise also works wonders for our cognitive function, as even a 15-minute walk outside can lengthen our attention span and improve our working memory. Another huge benefit is that most forms of outdoor exercise are free."



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## Five Ways to Stay Active This Fall

We can't argue with that! If you're on the fence about picking up a fitness routine this fall, or you're looking for fun, outside-the-box ideas to burn some calories during cooler weather, Healthier 901 has five great suggestions to get you outdoors and going (and hopefully keep you moving and grooving all through fall!):

### 1. Rake Your Way to Better Health

While raking leaves may not be the most fun form of exercise, it's a fantastic way to engage your muscle groups, improve your strength and burn (more than a few) calories along the way. Besides, how many workouts come with the added benefit of a better-looking yard?

**Pro tip:** Offer to rake and bag leaves for a neighbor in need to boost your physical *and* emotional well-being while bettering your community.

### 2. Take a Hike

(We mean that in a nice way.) Falling temps equal fewer bugs, changing scenery and way cooler conditions for exploring local trails by foot or bicycle. If you're not sure where to start, Shelby Farms Park has an incredible network of [paved and unpaved trails](#) with good options for every fitness level (beginners included). Leashed dogs are welcome!

**Pro tip:** Wear sturdy shoes for hiking and drink plenty of water along the way, even if you don't feel thirsty.

### 3. Pick Your Pleasure

For the ultimate fun fall activity, plan an outing to a local orchard that lets you pick your own produce. Aside from the fact that this won't feel like exercising (even though you're engaging in light cardio and stretching every step of the way!), you'll have a haul of fresh, locally sourced fruit to take home and enjoy. As a starting place, [Jones Orchard](#) in Millington, Tenn., offers apple, pear and pumpkin picking every September and October.

**Pro tip:** If you bring home beaucoup buckets of apples, whip up something nutritious *and* delicious using one or more of these [21 healthy apple recipes](#).

### 4. Go on an A-Mazing Adventure

Without a doubt, regular walking is one of the best activities you can do for your health—and fall is the perfect time of year for walks, jogs and runs. But this season, we're suggesting you get a little "corny" with your workout and stroll through one of the many corn mazes around the Mid-South. The aptly named [Mid-South Maze](#) is great (Jones Orchard has one, too!), and there are quite a few other places where you can take a walk that's sure to a-maze.

**Pro tip:** Let's look at mazes as a fun, fitness-oriented opportunity to celebrate with your family that weekend!

### 5. Move Nice and Slow-Ga With Outdoor Yoga

Outdoor yoga is an excellent way to combine light cardio, gentle stretching, deep breathing and natural beauty. If you're a yoga enthusiast, you already know the world is your studio—but if you're new to the mat, you can enjoy FREE yoga at 5:30 p.m. in Health Sciences Park every Wednesday in October. All experience levels are welcome—bring water and a mat and [register online](#) for a free spot, as space is limited.

**Pro tip:** Be sure to stretch before yoga to reduce the risk of injury, and if any pose causes pain or discomfort, listen to your body, stop and rest!

If none of these fall fitness opportunities feels like the right fit for you—or if you just can't quit the great indoors—you can take advantage of our complimentary catalog of [workouts on-demand](#) through the Healthier 901 app. Not a member? [Join the Healthier 901 movement](#) FREE and access our nutrition and fitness trackers, discount gym memberships, healthy cooking recipes and a whole lot more.

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