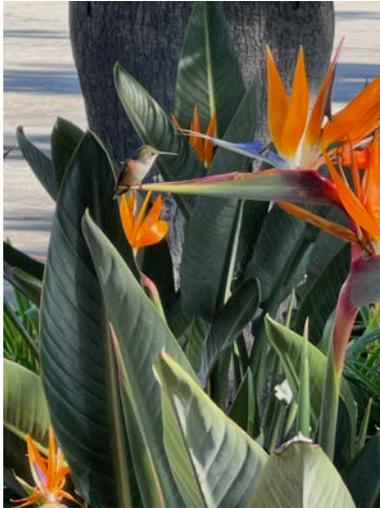


## Taking Time

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As pediatricians, we carry the burdens not only of our patients, their families, our coworkers, but also those of our family members and, also friends. It is easy for us to lose our sense of purpose when the world drains our energy. This is a new column for us to share the little ways we take time for ourselves when responsibilities never end.

Walking in nature is a vital component of mindfulness. There is value in spending time without an agenda, focusing on what is in our surroundings. Research has also noted what is called “involuntary attention” is beneficial in managing stress. This is explained as seeing something without the efforts of concentration and acquiring information. Stress Reduction

Theory also notes that viewing beautiful scenery, such as oceans, mountains, and trees, can produce pleasant emotions, such as curiosity, enjoyment, and tranquility (Ulrich, 1994). We often hear someone saying they want to go to their “happy place”, especially during times of distress.

Even with a busy clinic schedule, newborn exams in the hospital, meetings, and phone calls, a ten-minute walk is a non-negotiable component of my day, regardless of how many notes I need to finish. I try to go around lunch time, usually after I eat. My office is near the Santa Anita Race Track, but, there is a very nice walking path going to the race track. Birds of Paradise flowers line the path with their cloud of orange in the fall. During summer, African lilies have their shining moment. Hummingbirds speed by like fighter jets, as the mourning doves sing their sad song. House finches also take part of the cornucopia of seeds. Monarch butterflies glide by, occasionally meeting the yellow cloudless sulphurs and brown mourning cloaks. Even in the bright sun, the palm trees shade the path, which is covered by the purple jacaranda flowers.



Even if it is only ten minutes in a day, it is an opportunity to give yourself some time for just being in nature which houses us. I always feel that work is going to always be waiting for us and we will finish it. But, when opportunities pass, we don't know when the next one will arrive. We can enjoy a moment with the beauty around us, which can restore our ability to see the beauty in our lives.