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## Walk your way to good health

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### Abstract

Walking is to move along or travel on foot at a moderate rate; advance in such a manner that at least one foot is always on the ground. Walking is one of the most popular types of physical activity. "It is a surprisingly powerful way to strengthen your muscles, bones, and connective tissues as well as reduce body fat, increase endurance, and improve cardiovascular health." It's a less impactful exercise, with your body absorbing about one and a half times your body weight. Walking also distributes the weight more evenly for your feet and your legs. Whereas in running, is a higher impact exercise and each time your foot comes down, your body absorbs approximately three times your body weight. If you go at a brisk pace of walking at least 3 miles per hour, cardio or aerobic exercise works your large muscles over and over and pushes your heart and lungs to work hard. Walking can provide a lot of same benefits of running. But running burns nearly double the number of calories as walking. If your goal is to lose weight, running is a better choice than walking. If you're new to exercise or aren't able to run, walking can still help you get in shape. Walking is a great way to improve or maintain your overall health. Just 30 minutes every day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. It can also reduce your risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers. Unlike some other forms of exercise, walking is free and doesn't require any special equipment or training.

**Keywords:** Health, walking

### Introduction

Walking is low impact, requires minimal equipment, can be done at any time of day and can be performed at your own pace. You can get out and walk without worrying about the risks associated with some more vigorous forms of exercise. Walking is also a great form of physical activity for people who are overweight, elderly, or who haven't exercised in a long time. Walking for fun and fitness isn't limited to strolling by yourself around local neighbourhood streets. There are various clubs, venues and strategies you can use to make walking an enjoyable and social part of your lifestyle. You carry your own body weight when you walk. This is known as weight-bearing exercise. The National Institutes of Health recommends that seniors participate in 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity weekly and combine that activity with strength conditioning, balance and flexibility exercises. Walking may be one of the easiest and most effective forms of exercise out there for seniors. Whatever your level of mobility, it's a great way to get active, at your own pace. A regular walk can help you meet all of the four core fitness areas that the National Institute on Aging recommends for seniors – endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility – while also encouraging you to get outside and connect with others. Walking can offer great benefits to seniors looking to remain healthy, but it's important not to go too hard, too fast. Remember, every little bit helps. Walk down the block can help, so don't worry about briskly going three miles, at least not at first. Help your senior to work their way up, and remember to always keep it healthy. If one needs a push to get started, try to find creative ways to get them motivated. You could walk to a nearby park, go on an "art walk" in your community, bring around pets or grandkids, or find other ways to inspire your family to get up and moving (Health line, 2005) <sup>[1]</sup>.

### Physiological Benefits of Walking Improve Cardio Vascular Health

The physiological health advantages of walking and active travel include improvements to body composition, cardiovascular fitness, diastolic blood pressure, and glucose metabolism.

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These benefits can act both to improve existing health, and to help prevent many illnesses. Such benefits may ultimately provide protection against chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, and coronary heart disease, as well as providing relief for cancer patients and survivors and improved quality of life in stroke survivors. The specifics of how walking can reduce type II diabetes risk and cardiovascular disease risk, are increasingly being revealed. Studies showed that those who regularly engaged in physical activity of moderate intensity had a 30% lower risk of type II diabetes and also revealed that walking for at least 30 minutes, on at least five days per week resulted in lower levels of pro-inflammatory markers associated with the pathogenesis of the disease. This shows that walking can reduce the risk and severity of type II diabetes. Walking also has health benefits specifically related to pregnancy, with the potential to reduce risk of preeclampsia and preterm birth.

**Strengthen Bones, Muscles, and Joints:** While it is fairly low impact, walking is still a whole-body workout, offering benefits to your muscles, bones, and joints, all at once. Walking is a way to lubricate your joints, which need regular activity to stay functional. At the same time, the motions of walking help strengthen your supportive muscles and bones. Regular walking can help reduce the loss of bone mass during osteoporosis; reduce the risk of suffering hip fractures; and significantly reduce (or even prevent) arthritis pain.

#### **Improve Your Breath**

When walking, your breathing rate increases, causing oxygen to travel faster through bloodstream, helping to eliminate waste products and improve your energy level and the ability to heal.

**Fight Diseases:** Walking is a natural way to give your immune system a major boost. Similarly, walking has been shown to reduce your likelihood for developing chronic illness, including certain types of cancer.

**Promotes Healthy Weight:** Those who walked briskly for about an hour a day were significantly less likely to experience the effects of 32 common obesity-promoting genes. Similarly, recent research has suggested that regular walking can help curb your sweet tooth, leading to reduced cravings and intake of unhealthy, sugary sweets. Exercise burns calories. In the case of walking and running, the calories you burn depend much more on the distance you cover and your body weight than on your pace (Staying Healthy, n.d). This table shows calories burned per mile of walking or jogging on the level for people of varying weights:

#### **Delay the Onset of Varicose Veins**

As you age, your risk of varicose veins increases. However, walking is a proven way to prevent them from developing, the venous system includes a circulatory section known as ‘the second heart,’ which is formed by muscles, veins, and valves located in our calf and foot.”. “This system works to push blood back up to the heart and lungs—and walking strengthens this secondary circulatory system by strengthening and preserving leg muscle, which boosts healthy blood flow.”

#### **Improves Digestion**

Regular walking routine can greatly improve your bowel movements, “One of the very first things an abdominal

surgery patient is required to do is to walk because it utilizes core and abdominal muscles, encouraging movement in our GI system,”

#### **Increase Energy**

It may seem surprising, at first, but regular walking will help to improve your energy long-term. Walking helps to promote blood flow across the body, particularly for the muscles and brain. This increased flow makes us feel more energized, creating the fresh feel that our bodies experience after exercise.

**Help you Live Longer:** Research found that those who regularly exercised during their 50s and 60s, including walking, were 35 percent less likely to die over an eight-year span and walking just 25 minutes a day may add up to seven years to a person’s lifespan. Staying active also helps you stay connected to loved ones and friends who can provide emotional support, which is especially important as you age.

#### **Psychological Benefits of Walking**

Walking is a pursuit that people frequently underestimate, but it remains one of the best possible ways for everyone to get outside and be active. Something that everyone can take part in, simply incorporating walking into your daily routine or making time for walking in the evening or weekends can provide an incredible range of health advantages, not just for the body but also the mind. A good walk can do wonders for your mental wellbeing. It improves self-perception and self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, and it reduces stress, anxiety and fatigue. Physically active people have up to a 30% reduced risk of becoming depressed, and staying active helps those who are depressed recover. When we go for a walk, our circulation increases, which nourishes our whole body with blood and oxygen. This nourishment provides what our tissues need to repair themselves, often solving minor issues before we even notice them. Walking also helps calm the mind and reduce the effects of stress. The rhythm of walking helps us enter a light meditative state, which then regulates breathing, lowers stress hormones, and can bring a sense of peace and calm. The actual act of putting one foot in front of the other keeps our bodies and minds in conversation with each other. The motion of it involves complex interactions between muscles, bones, and connective tissues. Walking helps tune up those interactions, and increase coordination in general. Going outside to walk increases all these benefits by adding fresh air and uneven ground. The fresh air, open space, and interactions with nature all help to boost the immune system and regulate sensory processing, and may offer a sense of peacefulness. Uneven ground keeps our coordination and stabilization systems active, reducing the likelihood of falling and helping improve joint health. Going for a walk is one of the most fundamental self-care practices we can do. It directly supports comprehensive mental and physical health, which in turn increases our internal feelings of vitality and our overall sense of wellbeing.

#### **Improve Mood**

One of the best things about walking is that it gives our mind a moment to relax, without having to work through the many tasks that we complete every day. Even if it is just for a moment, this is vital and makes a massive difference to our mood throughout the day. There is also scientific fact behind the idea that walking boosts our mood. As with any physical activity, walking releases endorphins through our body, which are known to improve our mood.

Going for a walk could be a powerful way to improve your

mental health and well-being. Studies proved that there was a direct connection between mood and walking. In short, the more steps a person took per day, the more positive their attitude, mood and outlook. One major reason behind the connection could be that walking helps naturally release endorphins and promote circular breathing, leading to positive emotional benefits.

### **Reduce Stress and Anxiety**

Endorphins are also known to reduce our stress levels which, when combined with the act of taking time out of our day to go walking, can make a noticeable difference to our stress levels. Being active can reduce the likelihood of clinical depression while spending more time surrounded by nature is another well-proven way of calming the mind.

**Slow Cognitive Decline and Dementia:** Walking may be a way for seniors to remain mentally sharp with age. When looking at women 65 or older, researchers found that women who walked more experienced less age-related mental decline overall walk.

### **Promote Body Confidence**

This makes it the ideal hobby for people looking to introduce some more exercise into their routine, without putting their body under unwanted strain. Despite its ease, regular walking will deliver many of the same benefits of more high-intensity training over time. These benefits include changes to your body, which will help to improve your self-confidence.

**Better Sleep and Improve Sleep Habits:** It may be easier to catch a few “z’s” at night if you take a walk in the early morning. Looking at women between the ages of 50 and 75, researchers discovered that those who walked each morning were a lot less likely to experience insomnia than those who didn’t go for walks. If you work out regularly, you’ll sleep better at night. That’s because sleep naturally boosts the effects of melatonin, the sleep hormone. Postmenopausal women who do light to moderate intensity physical activity snooze better at night than those who are sedentary. Walking also helps reduce pain and stress, which can cause sleep disturbances. Walking isn’t just good for increasing our energy levels; it helps to promote effective rest, too. Regular exercise helps our bodies regulate their sleep patterns, meaning that walking helps we get to sleep when we need it and achieve a deeper sleep. This makes walking particularly useful for people suffering from sleep disorders.

### **Stronger Focus**

If you are struggling to think of something, whether it be a project at work or ideas for the home, a walk may hold the secrets to getting over that mental obstacle. Again, this relates to the increase in blood flow that walking, even for just ten minutes, can provide. Incorporating walking into your routine can help to improve concentration and creativity while establishing a regular walking pattern has been proven to develop even more long-term benefits in this regard.

### **Walking Can Help You Feel More Creative**

Whether you’re feeling stuck at work or you’ve been searching for a solution to a tricky problem, research shows it’s a good idea to get moving: According to a 2014 study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology, Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, going for a walk can spark creativity. “Researchers administered creative-thinking tests to subjects while seated and while walking and found that the walkers thought more creatively than the sitters.

## **Social Benefits**

### **More Social Opportunities**

Being social is an essential part of everyone’s wellbeing, and many look to incorporate getting active with social activities. Walking is an excellent choice for people looking to get out and enjoy the world with their friends or family, as it’s easy for everyone to take part and doesn’t require any high-intensity effort. Enjoying that evening or weekend meetup while exploring the natural world is the perfect way to get more activity into your life. Sharing in the beauty of a sublime view or landscape, even with a stranger, can help you feel part of a wider community of those who appreciate nature. There are many organisations that arrange regular group walks and hiking expeditions. This gives an opportunity for walkers to commune together and get some quality face-to-face time with likeminded people. Organised regular walking can also help combat social exclusion, especially in the elderly population or particularly isolated communities. If you can’t access an in-person community, then there are plenty of online forums, apps and groups to take a look at. It’s no secret that ‘likes’ on Instagram are likely to give you a bit of an endorphin rush; sharing pictures of your walking experience on social media is a great way to boost your presence in the community and make online connections. Activity trackers can be used to show your walking progress which can also be posted online. Getting encouragement from the community can help you feel more able to reach your goals.

### **Make New Friends**

Groups that promote regular walking create a space for walkers to make new friends who enjoy the same type of activity as them. They may not live similar lives outside of their mutual love of walking, so walking activities are an excellent chance for so many different people to connect and form unlikely relationships. Spending long walks with others creates a good opportunity for some quality bonding time and provides a change of scenery from drinks in the pub.

**Foster Social Connections:** When you go out and walk around, you’re much more likely to connect with others, whether that means joining a local walking club, or simply chatting with neighbours as you go down the block. Walking increases opportunities for face-to-face social contact and helps people to map their neighbourhood in social terms. Trust, sympathy, respect, understanding, loyalty and co-operation – qualities core to social connection – come more easily through direct contact.

### **Stronger Focus**

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## **Conclusions**

There is an old proverb that ‘Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Walking is the most vital exercise for the human body to remain in a state of a healthy mind. Every person in the world should be more concentrated in the morning walk and running for better improvements in health. It is light precise and best for

physical fitness. The morning environment has the fresh air and the moisture that is in the green grass which alternatively best for the other health problems of the body. Walk, for a better life and healthy life one should do the morning walk. As it is the part of the exercise that makes the human body fit and fitness is the source of the regular some exercise, we called some as walk.

A walk with positive thoughts enhances a happy life as the positivity around you means good mental health. We cannot relatively give the importance and the results of the doping walk every day that can only be visualized by the experience and self-actions.

So, the Walking programme and its good effects should be promoted by health wing of the society and from the local level too.

In conclusion, a walk in the park might be the best thing you can do to lower stress levels and increase productivity, and therefore companies should encourage their employees to do so regularly. And what better way to encourage this than to organize a nature excursion in the closest city park. Besides the already mentioned health benefits your employees will be engaging in a group activity, getting to know their work colleagues in a different setting, and learning something new at the same time, together.

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